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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Do you think a
180-day delay in
the implementation
of federalization will
help the CNMI?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
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INSIDE



Plane Crash

A single engine turboprop airplane nose-dived into a cemetery, killing 14 to 17 people aboard.

NATION...Page 14



New Mission

For decades, the mission of the Japanese military has been straightforward: Defend the homeland. That is changing.

ASIA...Page 15



Newly Married

Bruce Willis has tied the knot for the second time.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 21

Senate chief hopes Asiana will stay in NMI. PAGE 3

Tinian JROTC team makes it to nat'l championship. PAGE 5

It's official: McPhetres is out

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

After weeks of "is she" or "isn't she," Agnes McPhetres is no longer a member of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents, now that Gov. Benigno Fitial accepted her resignation letter yesterday.



McPhetres

With this delivered letter, the question of Ms. McPhetres' status with the board has now been clearly resolved.

—Gov. Benigno Fitial

Questions have swirled about the status of McPhetres since March 6, when her resignation letter was dated.

The board said McPhetres' resignation became automatically effective when

they received the letter on that date. But Fitial disagreed, saying he never received the letter and, as far as he was concerned, McPhetres was still an active member of

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Furlough, non-renewal letters being prepared

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

As the government prepares to lay off employees, department heads are having a difficult time identifying people they are legally able to furlough, according to Esther Fleming, special assistant for administration.



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WITH \$574.5M IN UNFUNDDED LIABILITY

Fund receivership hinges on pending bankruptcy bill

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund's unfunded liability has grown to \$574.5 million, bringing the agency's funded level to less than 40 percent, which is way below the 70 percent threshold that allows any private pen-

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MBA's Demapan, Lee are Covenant debate champs



Micaela T. Demapan, left, of Marianas Baptist Academy, wins the Covenant Day Debate senior division, while fellow MBA student Young Eun Lee, second from right, wins in the junior division during the NMI Council for the Humanities-sponsored competition at the CNMI Supreme Court in Susupe yesterday. The finalists debated the resolve "U.S. Public Law 110-229 violates the CNMI's right of self-government under Section 103 of the Covenant." Also in photo are MBA student Jessica Lee, who won second place in the senior division, and their coach, Lorna Liban, right.

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The year 2009 is proving to be a banner year for Marianas Baptist Academy after it dominated the Seventh Annual Covenant Debate yesterday at the Supreme Court, with two of the school's debaters winning the championship rounds in both junior and senior divisions.

Micaela T. Demapan bested fellow MBA student Jessica Lee in the high school category during the debate that

centered on the recently enacted law extending federal control of immigration to the CNMI.

Debaters argued for or against the resolve that "U.S. Public Law 110-229 violates the CNMI's rights of local self-government under Section 103 of the Covenant."

Demapan, a junior student, defended the negative part.

Demapan and Lee were also the gold and silver medalists in the recently concluded National Forensic League's Lin-

coln Douglas Debate, a ticket that qualified them to be this year's competitors in the Covenant debate.

"It feels really good! This is my first time in the Covenant Debate and I am glad I made it," Demapan told *Saipan Tribune* after receiving the perpetual plaque, which she will hold throughout the year.

Demapan admitted that, prior to the debate, she had only a passing knowledge of the subject but research helped

See MBA'S on Page 4

Local

James Santos' counsel: Allegations would confuse jury

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Former Commerce Secretary James A. Santos, the co-defendant of Lt Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez in the CUC fraud case, has argued that the "overt act" issue would confuse the jury and would be contrary to law.

Attorney Victorino DLG. Torres, counsel for Santos, asserted in a motion in limine that it would be confusing to the jury for the prosecutor to argue that the "overt act" that occurred between 1998 to 2000 is a basis for a conviction.

Motion in limine refers to a request submitted by a party in a case to the court before trial in an attempt to exclude evidence

from the proceedings.

The prosecution has argued that there was one ongoing conspiracy, one ongoing agreement that began in 1998 and went dormant for a period and was reactivated in 2007.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric O'Malley stated in the indictment that on Dec. 7, 2007, James Santos signed a check in the amount of \$15,000 drawn upon an account belonging to himself and his wife, Joaquina, and made payable to Villagomez.

O'Malley said that on that same day, Villagomez deposited the check into his personal bank account.

A day before that, Dec. 6, 2007, Joaquina Santos allegedly deposited a CUC Operations

Fund check in the amount of \$50,000 into an account belonging to Blue Pacific as payment for an order of Rydlyme, a de-scaling chemical.

O'Malley said that on Jan. 15, 2008, a co-conspirator, acting on behalf of CUC, authorized payment of \$10,000 to Blue Pacific.

O'Malley said that on Jan. 16, 2008, Joaquina Santos deposited a CUC Operations Fund check into a Blue Pacific account.

The prosecutor said that on multiple occasions throughout the 2007 transaction, Villagomez, acting from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, contacted co-conspirators, as well as other CUC officers and employees, and pressured them into concluding the contract with, and making the

payments to, Blue Pacific and the Santos couple.

James Santos was the alleged owner and operator of a company named ISLAS, which supplied CUC with Rydlyme. ISLAS was then allegedly reconstituted under a different name, Blue Pacific.

Torres pointed out that the alleged "overt acts" must come within the statute of limitation from the date of the indictment and accordingly, all the alleged overt acts that allegedly occurred between 1998 to 2000 should be stricken.

"Such presentation or argument, if allowed to do so, would be highly prejudicial to the defendant in the minds of the jury in that they may believe that the alleged 'overt act' that occurred between

1998 to 2000 could be a basis for a guilty verdict," he said.

The lawyer said an ordinary objection during the course of trial, even if sustained with proper instructions to the jury, will not remove such effect and an order in limine is necessary.

Should the court deny the motion in limine, Torres asked the court to instruct the jury that the alleged "overt acts" that occurred between 1998 to 2000 cannot be a basis for a conviction and that an "overt act" must come within the five years from the date of the indictment.

Torres said these allegations in the "overt acts" clearly fall outside the statute of limitations and cannot be a basis for conviction.

Citing a previous case, Tor-

res said the U.S. Supreme Court reversed a conviction because it was impossible to discern which overt acts the jury relied upon in their conviction.

Accordingly, he said, it would be immaterial and unnecessary to the disposition of this case and contrary to the holding in the previous ruling to permit the prosecution from presenting arguments that the "overt act" could be any of the activities that occurred between 1998 to 2000 for purposes of a conviction.

Villagomez and his co-defendants had earlier filed several motions, but the court denied all of them.

The jury trial of the defendants will begin on March 30.

Psychologist OK'd for fake money case suspect

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The federal court has granted the request of one of three persons who were allegedly responsible for passing counterfeit bills to retain the services of a psychologist to examine his ability to stand trial.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson said that Lucas Taitano Manglona may retain the services of psychologist Dr. Ron Meister to conduct a competency examination.

Munson said Meister's examination on Manglona may be videotaped and that the defendant may retain the services of a Chamorro language translator/interpreter for assistance during the examination.

The judge directed the U.S. Probation Office to obtain copies of Manglona's medical and psychiatric records, including any still being held by Dr. Laura Post.

Munson ordered Manglona's

counsel, Robert T. Torres, to coordinate with the psychiatrist, the Commonwealth Health Center, the Department of Corrections, and the U.S. Marshal to effect the transfer of Manglona to the psychiatric facilities at CHC, for a period not to exceed 45 days.

The 45-day period may be extended only by a court order, Munson said.

In a motion for competency examination, Torres said the Office of Probation's pretrial services report indicates that Manglona has been receiving prescriptions for psychotropic drugs, including Halodol and Haloperidol.

Torres said the substance of the report strongly suggests that his client suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and, at the very least, warrants a competency determination by a forensic psychiatrist.

The lawyer said he previously represented Manglona in a criminal case before the Superior Court several years ago.

At that time, he said, Manglona was examined by forensic psychiatrist Dr. Post and was found to be incompetent to stand trial, much less assist his attorney.

Torres said his interactions with Manglona in the federal court case and consultations with the defendant's mother suggest that Manglona's competency may still be at issue.

Citing a previous federal court ruling, Torres said a person may not be tried for an offense if, at any time during the proceedings, the defendant lacks capacity to consult with his attorney "with a reasonable degree of rational understanding" as well as be able to understand the facts and nature of his case.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Secret Service, with the assistance of local police, arrested Manglona, his brother Nestor Camacho Taitano, and Kisha Lyn Masga King for counterfeiting. The three pleaded not guilty.

Company sues Labor for barring it from hiring alien workers

Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas noted in his decision that Cody, after considering sworn testimony at a hearing, including that of the foreign worker, concluded that Faura has a financial interest in and operated the business.

"Corporate formalities, as evidenced in annual reports, cannot trump the facts on the ground," San Nicolas said.

San Nicolas said an employer is also at risk of debarment in any Labor proceeding and is on notice to that effect.

On the cease order issue, the Secretary said a hearing officer may stop illegal conduct with a cease and desist order. However, he said, there may be a question as to the necessary predicate for that sanction.

San Nicolas said that, based on the record, the imposition of a fine is authorized and appropriate in this case. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

Annuncio - Arongorong Announcement

YOUR COMMENTS ARE MOST WELCOME:

VR FY - 2010 State Plan Goals

Goal 1. Deliver quality and timely services to applicants and consumers.

Goal 2. Serve as an advocate for individuals with disabilities.

Goal 3. Continue to work closely with the Workforce Investment Board to maintain and improve the best features of our workforce development system and to initiate efforts to integrate services for consumers.

Goal 4. Facilitate and ensure the seamless transition of students with disabilities to employment or continued education.

SPIL Amendment to Current Goals:

Goal 1) Increase the community's level of awareness of the independent living movement, individuals and systems advocacy;

Goal II) Provide certain independent living core services; the four core services and transportation services to individuals with significant disabilities.

For more information on the VR & SPIL State Plans, please contact:

Margarita R. Olopai-Taitano
OVR Director

Kaye Christian, SILC Chairperson

Jess Elameto, SRC Chairperson



The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Statewide



Independent Living Council (SILC), will be conducting statewide public forums on FY 2008–2010 State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services and to amend the current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). YOU are ALL invited and encouraged to please participate in the scheduled public forums. The forums will provide opportunities for public comments on how well services are met and what need to be strengthened in our State Plans. Let us know how best the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation shall and should serve people with disabilities residing in Saipan, Tinian and Rota. What barriers exist that currently prevent our people with disabilities from getting or keeping a job? More importantly, recommend solutions to those barriers. Overall, how can OVR and our local communities work together to prepare, secure and maintain employment and promote independence for and among eligible people with disabilities?

Community Forum on VR & IL State Plan FY 2008—2010

SAIPAN

March 25, 2009
Multi-Purpose Center

State Plan for
Vocational
Rehabilitation
at 5:30 p.m.

State Plan for
Independent Living
at 6:35 to 7:35 p.m.

ROTA

March 26, 2009
WIA Office

State Plan for
Vocational
Rehabilitation
at 5:30 p.m.

State Plan for
Independent Living
at 6:35 to 7:35 p.m.

TINIAN

March 31, 2009
TINIAN Aging Center

State Plan for
Vocational
Rehabilitation
at 5:30 p.m.

State Plan for Inde-
pendent Living
At 6:35 to 7:35 p.m.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION: If you require special accommodation (e.g., large print, sign language interpreter) to participate in the public forums, please contact the OVR Council Liaison Magin Iginoef at least 2 days before the scheduled forums. Copies of the plans can be obtained and accessed at [website & office](#).

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PO Box 501521 Saipan, MP 96950 • website: www.ovr.gov.mp

Senate chief hopes Asiana will stay in NMI

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Senate President Pete Reyes said he is reasonably optimistic Asiana Airlines will not pull out of the CNMI, despite the company losing millions of dollars annually in the Commonwealth.

Reyes, along with Gov. Benigno Fitial, recently traveled to South Korea to meet with Kumho Asiana chairman and chief executive officer Sam-Koo Park to seek additional flights to the CNMI, in order to fill the gap left by Northwest Airlines canceling some of their flights.

"They are willing to look at the flights, the schedule, and to see what they can do to increase their flights, if they can increase the slots," Reyes said.

The airline has contemplated pulling out of the CNMI completely, the Senate president said.

Last week it was reported

that Asiana Airlines posted a loss of \$10 million on its Saipan-Korea flights in Fiscal Year 2008—a 100-percent jump over the carrier's previous loss of some \$5 million.

But Reyes quoted Park as saying he remains committed to staying in the CNMI, and Park sounded optimistic they could increase the number of flights.

"The chairman himself, on several occasions, made the statement that he didn't realize that he was committing themselves to a greater level to the CNMI than he wished to. But he is willing to live up to that commitment. So in that sense it's very positive," the Senate president said.

Kumho made a significant investment in the CNMI through the purchase of Laolao Bay Golf Resort in February 2007 and has since made substantial improvements to include a new club house and other facilities,

completing the first phase of its \$68.8 million luxury golf resort community project on Saipan. As part of Kumho Asiana's investment in the CNMI, the company substantially increased flights to



Reyes

and from Korea. But beginning March 29, Asiana will suspend its four daytime flights between Seoul and Saipan until June 30. At present, the company has 16 regular daily flights to the CNMI—11 from Incheon, two from Busan, and three from Osaka. Asiana is the only international airline serving the Saipan-Korea route.

Reyes noted that the Legislature has passed a resolution offering any support possible to help Kumho. The resolution applauded the company for its commitment to the CNMI.

"The resolution is an expression from the CNMI Legislature for the Kumho organization to support the CNMI, for their commitment to continue to invest in the CNMI, even though there are indications of

economic downturn," Reyes said. "They are not leaving us, definitely not leaving us. That's a good sign. That alone is a very positive outlook. We offered what we can do to encourage them to increase the number of flights they have."

Saipan general manager Kwang Joong Kim has also said that although Asiana is "bleeding deeply" in the CNMI, the company is committed to staying.

"We're not making a profit here [in the CNMI]. We already lost millions of dollars. We sacrificed a lot. However, we have the commitment to fulfill and we're intending to continue it," Kim said earlier.

Reyes conceded that there have been many airlines that have promised their commitment and good relationship with the CNMI, but ultimately pulled

out. He hopes that will not be the case with Asiana.

"We hope this relationship is not going to result in any decision to pull out and they seem very committed to helping out the CNM," he said.

He admitted, though, these decisions are based on profit.

"They can pull out totally depending on their business and they're profit driven, so it's up to us to ensure the relationship is good enough, that they have the capital necessary to hang on and hope things get better," he said. "They are hopeful things will get better. I am also very hopeful things will get better. I don't know if it can get any worse than it is right now."

New law allows NPs to treat without supervision

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno Fitial signed into law yesterday a bill allowing nurse practitioners to prescribe medications and treat conditions within their scope of practice without doctor supervision.

Public Law 16-34 amends an earlier law, allowing nurse practitioners to diagnose and prescribe within their scope as defined by the Nursing Board.

Arley Gutierrez-Long, the advanced practice registered nurse at the Tinian Health Center, said the main focus of the law is to give the Nursing Board Examiners the ability to govern nurse practitioners and provide regulations. Regulations have never been standardized and followed, she said.

The new law is cost effective, she added. Medicaid and Medicare reimburse 85 to 95 percent for mid-level practitioners. Availability is also critical. By 2025, there is expected to be a substantial shortage



KRISTI EATON
Gov. Benigno Fitial signs a bill into law in his office yesterday. Public Law 16-34 allows nurse practitioners to diagnose and treat patients within their scope of practice without doctor supervision.

of physicians and this will help the CNMI prepare for that in the long term, she said.

During testimony at the Legislature in February, Ben Aldan, president of the Saipan Health Clinic, raised concerns about the creation of the regulations. Aldan urged the lawmakers to set their own definitions because the composition of the Nursing Board changes every year. He said he was trying to be cautious.

"It's so easy to prescribe something and find out

See NEW LAW on Next Page

Deadline for Chamber scholarship application

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

High school seniors have until April 3 to apply for a Saipan Chamber of Commerce college scholarship.

The largest business group in the CNMI awards deserving high school students a one-time \$1,500 scholarship grant to help defray the cost of their postsecondary education.

Kathryn H. Barry, chairperson of the Chamber's education committee, said applicants should meet seven criteria to bag the scholarship grant, including enrollment as a senior in a secondary school on Saipan, a proof of accep-

tance to a college or university of their choice, and a grade point average of 3.5 or higher at the time of the application.

Applicants must also have completed either the SAT or ACT college entrance examinations and submit their scores, and must submit letters of recommendation from two people—one should be from a business employer or an educator.

The Chamber also requires applicants to complete a personal interview with the education committee, and submit an essay of no more than 1,000 words on the topic, "How I will use my education to improve the CNMI."

Chamber scholarships will be

awarded on June 3.

For the first time, the Chamber also offers this year two scholarships for students at the Northern Marianas Trades Academy, to be awarded on May 6.

The Chamber's Educational Scholarship Fund provides one-time monetary awards to eligible high school seniors who demonstrate academic and personal excellence and who will be attending a two- or four-year college.

Funding for the Chamber's scholarship program and other educational activities comes from the installation dinner's silent auction, corporate challenge, golf tournament, and election year debates.

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MBA'S*From Page 1*

her better understand the "timely and interesting" issue.

Demapan cited two main contentions in her argument.

"First, a provision of the U.S. Constitution says that the U.S. has control over the territories. For instance, if it wants to take over the immigration system, it can do that here on Saipan," she said.

Citing the language of Section 101 of the Covenant, Demapan said it clearly states that the United States has sovereignty over the CNMI and taking over its immigration system is just a legal process.

Demapan, the daughter of Frances and Chief Justice Miguel Demapan, also impressed judges during the question-and-answer portion, where she cited facts and figures used by various parties and agencies that conducted studies on the subject.

FUND*From Page 1*

sion fund to file for bankruptcy.

Mark Aguon, administrator of the NMI Retirement Fund, said the pension fund "is currently just below 40 percent funded."

Juan T. Guerrero, chairman of the NMI Retirement Fund's board of trustees, said filing for bankruptcy—which is among the first steps before the pension fund can be placed under receivership—may be an "inevitable consequence of the government's continued non-payment of statutorily required employer contributions."

However, the bill that would have allowed the NMI Retirement Fund to file for bankruptcy when its total unfunded accrued liability exceeds 60 percent of the total obligation of the fund has yet to be passed—over a year after it was introduced.

House Bill 16-36, co-authored by Floor Leader Joseph N. Camacho and Rep. Joseph C. Reyes, is under review by the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

"It is encouraging that the Legislature seems to be aware of, and understanding of our dire fiscal emergency; however, we are still awaiting the passage of House Bill 16-36 which would

Junior Division

In the junior division, MBA's Young Eun Lee bested competitor Glen Florendo of Grace Christian Academy. The two were the top winners in the NJFL debate competition last Saturday.

Also a first-timer to the Covenant debate competition, Lee feels proud of her achievement.

"It was unexpected! It's really amazing...because I know I had a tough competitor. I am so happy and proud to win this award," Lee said.

The eighth grader, who defended the affirmative side of the resolve, admitted that the split opinion and views of the community and experts on the issue made the subject more interesting.

Lee presented three contentions: the law would impact Saipan's economy, restrict the CNMI's government from self-governing its citizens, and U.S. action toward the Commonwealth.

"Public Law 110-229 violates Section 103 because it is requiring what the Commonwealth is not requiring. If the CNMI does follow the law, then its

forced removal of two-thirds of existing employment base and its projected devastation of the local economy by 50 percent or more would violate constitutional rights of due process and equal protection of NMI people, employers, and property owners," she argued, adding that based on Section 103 of the Covenant, the people of the CNMI has the right of local self-government and would govern themselves with respect to internal affairs in accordance with a Constitution of their own adoption.

The 14-year-old student said these violations will have a negative impact on Saipan's economy by prohibiting the CNMI from ensuring an adequate supply of labor for local residents and businesses.

This law, she added, will also prevent the Commonwealth government from protecting the interests of both its citizens and foreign workers presently on the islands and from collecting millions of dollars from local employers and foreign workers that are used to provide essential social services.

allow for precisely this situation," Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune*.

The NMI Retirement Fund Working Group chaired by Rep. Ray N. Yumul is currently drafting an omnibus bill that aims to stabilize the Fund.

'Exhaust all means'

The Retirement Fund's total assets, including investments and loans, stood at \$304.5 million as presented to the board during its March 19 meeting. In fiscal year 2007, total assets were around \$514 million.

This does not include nearly \$233 million in unpaid employer contributions, plus statutory penalty.

"It is crucial that the board exhaust every means to collect these funds from the plan sponsor, the CNMI government. If we can collect even three-fourths of this unpaid amount, our assets available for benefits would be over \$450 million," Aguon said.

The Retirement Fund's total liability of \$879 million was determined by the fiscal year 2007 actuarial report, and this number has not yet been revised.

"Unfunded liability is the difference of total liability and total assets. In the above case, unfunded liability would be \$879 million minus \$304.5 million equals \$574.5 million," said Aguon.

This is 65 percent of the Retirement Fund's total liability.

A CNMI emergency

"The board is doing everything within its powers to prevent the need to declare bankruptcy, and eventual receivership, as well as possibly ceasing refund payments, which heavily impacts our current cash standing," Guerrero said.

The board chairman said the Retirement Fund cash flow problem is a CNMI-wide emergency, and this is the reason the pension agency urged the Legislature and the administration to form a joint, non-partisan working group to devise a solution to shore up the problems in the Fund.

"It is our hope that this non-partisan working group, chaired by Rep. Ray Yumul, with the consensus of all parties, will devise a plan to begin to identify and address weaknesses within the Fund and do what is necessary to strengthen the Fund," Guerrero added.

No magic number

The NMI Retirement Fund does not have a magic number that will signal when to declare bankruptcy.

Aguon said if the NMI Retirement Fund were a private business, declaring bankruptcy would be the point when the expenses exceed revenues for a protracted period. In general economic theory, that would be the point where marginal costs exceed marginal revenue.

"Clearly, we have already reached

Lee is the daughter of Kwang Eun Lee and Young Ae Lee.

'For God's glory'

MBA coach-teacher Lorna Liban was elated with her students' achievement yesterday.

"I am very proud of our students today. Even though they had less time to prepare, they did their best and again, we would like everyone to know that MBA's success is because we want to do things for God's glory," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

MBA held the Covenant championship title in the junior division last year when Mark Anthony Liban ruled the competition. The senior division was then dominated by Marianas High School's Rachel Reyes.

Liban said that MBA has been consistent in getting top places both in the NFL and NJFL debate events for three consecutive years.

MBA also won this year's mock trial rounds, middle school academic challenge bee, Scripps Spelling bee in

Guam, and dominated the CNMI delegates to the NFL, NJFL nationals.

The Covenant Debate is a program organized by the NMI Council for the Humanities.

NEW LAW*From Page 2*

it's really bad for the patient later on," he said.

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee, in its report recommending the bill's passage, cited the difficulty of recruiting physicians and the lack of staff at the hospital and other health centers in the CNMI.

The report said health care is severely disrupted when a doctor goes on vacation or abruptly leaves, which has happened many times.

There are more than 125,000 NPs practicing in the United States and 88 percent have graduate degrees, according to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

watch list status.

"For comparison, the NMIRF is currently just below 40 percent funded. Among the PBGC's regulatory enforcement powers is the authority to perfect and enforce a statutory lien if an employer has not made required minimum funding contributions, and unpaid amounts total more than \$1 million. Clearly, the recent actions of the board to restrict retirement, file a lawsuit against the plan sponsor, as well as consider additional benefit reductions, are comparably minuscule to what the PBGC would do, if this Fund were run as a private plan," Aguon said.

Wiped out

The Retirement Fund warns that the CNMI pension program may be wiped out in five years or as early as three years due to the government's unpaid obligation and the impact of the global economic crisis on the NMI Retirement Fund's investment portfolio.

For fiscal years 2006 and 2007, a law legalized the suspension of payments to the Fund. Although the suspension was lifted in FY 2008, the government is still delinquent in its payments.

Government contributions are to fund current operations, pension and other benefit costs, as well as to service the long-term actuarially accrued liability.

stone, Fleming said.

"You can't promise something you haven't seen," she said.

She added that because the Legislature passed a provision in the budget requiring the lawmakers' approval to fill non-essential positions, once the employees are given their letters of furlough or non-contract renewal, they are gone.

"If we let them go, they're gone," she said.

Finance Secretary Eloy Inos earlier said it's possible that thousands of employees could be let go.

Fitial then wrote to Cepeda, saying he still considered McPhetres an active member of the board because he hadn't received nor accepted the letter from the former regent, although it was leaked to the media.

The Board of Regents' legal counsels were to prepare an opinion on the issue. But it had yet to be finalized before Fitial announced yesterday he was accepting McPhetres' resignation.

FURLough*From Page 1*

The recent passage of the \$156.76 million Fiscal Year 2009 budget means the local government must cut its spending to fit the ceiling. After the budget became law, Gov. Benigno Fitial, who vetoed the budget proposal, said layoffs would be necessary, although the administration does not know how many would be affected.

Many of the employees are civil

service and cannot be let go, Fleming said. If personnel cannot be reduced, operations will need to be downsized, something that is nearly impossible, Fleming said.

"Operations will be affected," she said, "but, also, they're operating at very minimal amount, so that means we will try to work with other departments."

Fleming has asked department secretaries and directors to work with the Office of Personnel Management to prepare a budget projection through Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year.

Fitial said in a statement. "I respect her decision and I believe she made this decision with the best interests of the college in mind."

Previously, according to the statement, McPhetres met with Fitial about resigning from the board but did not actually deliver a resignation letter to him.

In the letter to Fitial dated March 6, McPhetres, a former NMC presi-

dent, voiced her frustration and disappointment with the management practices being employed by the current president, Dr. Carmen Fernandez, who McPhetres said lacks transparency and forthrightness in dealing with the board and the accrediting commission.

"I have lost faith and trust in the president's ability to lead our institution into the future. Under such circum-

stances, I can no longer be an effective board member," McPhetres told the governor.

Her resignation was confirmed at the time by regents chair Charles V. Cepeda, who said he received a copy of McPhetres' resignation letter addressed to Fitial. But two days later, McPhetres submitted a new letter to the board, rescinding her decision and canceling her first letter.

Tinian JROTC team makes it to nat'l championship

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After advancing in two phases of competitions, the Tinian High School JROTC academic team will fly to the national event in Washington, D.C. in June as representative of the Commonwealth.

The team, composed of Patrick Diaz, Alisha Shrestha, Chelsie Manglona, and Carl Lou Espinoza, will compete in the championship round of the College Options Foundation's 2009 JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl at the George Mason University campus in Washington.

The event is slated for June

26 through 30.

Earlier this month, the Tinian JROTC team competed in two rounds of competitive online play against thousands of JROTC students from across the world to win a slot in the final round and the trip to the nation's capital. In these rounds, students were tested on standard high school curriculum, math, science, English, and leadership skills.

Saipan Tribune learned that the Tinian team is one of only 24 in the nation to advance to the finals.

The JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl is a nationally recognized academic competition created exclusively for

JROTC students. By participating, cadets learn the values of citizenship, academic competition, and college opportunity. The competition creates tremendous opportunities for JROTC and its cadets by demonstrating the academic abilities of JROTC students.

The Tinian team was recently presented the 13th Brigade's first place plaque by Lt. Col. Bob Gay, director of the CNMI JROTC, for its outstanding performance during the brigade online competition on March 13 in front of the entire school body, its principal Florine Hofsneider, the CNMI Youth Summit Council High School mem-

bers, teachers, and chaperones.

Gay stated that this is a very big achievement not only for Tinian but the entire CNMI Public School System and the JROTC Program.

"A number of our CNMI JROTC programs did exceptionally well in both the academic and leadership competitions and we want to continue to excel in these national endeavors. There is much to do before the June competition. The cadets will need to study hard and be prepared to take on the best of the best. They will also have a great learning experience by meeting cadets from around the world, touring Washington,

D.C., and establishing lasting friendships," he said.

He told *Saipan Tribune* that there are approximately 1,645 JROTC programs in the world and over 280,000 cadets.

"Tinian is one of the 24 schools to have earned the honor to compete at the national level," he said, describing the accomplishment as "awesome" and hopes to see it continued into the future for all CNMI schools.

The College Options Foun-

dation is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the academic development of high school students and assisting them in their preparation for higher education using academic competitions, college exam study guides, college admissions tutorials and personalized counseling.

The foundation has assisted the nation's 1.1 million Department of Defense-JROTC students worldwide.

Boy, 12, nabbed for breaking GES classroom's glass door

A 12-year-old student was arrested for allegedly shattering the glass door of one of the classrooms at Garapan Elementary School on Saturday morning.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said yesterday that the 12-year-old boy, a student of GES, was arrested for criminal mischief.

Ogumoro said the GES vice principal detained two other GES students—ages 11 and 12—for being in the school campus.

Police brought the boy who

damaged the glass door to DPS and then transported the two other children to their homes.

Ogumoro said DPS received a call on Saturday at 11:51am about a criminal mischief at GES.

Responding police officers learned that the juvenile suspect used a hollow block to break the glass door of a 4th grade classroom.

Ogumoro said the acting vice principal caught the minor as well as the two other boys and immediately called the police. (*Ferdie dela Torre*)

Continental offers double OnePass Elite qualifying miles

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI frequent flyers via Continental Micronesia can now earn OnePass Elite status twice as fast.

In a statement Friday, Continental Airlines announced that frequent flyers can earn double Elite Qualifying miles on flights operated by Continental Airlines, Continental Micronesia, Continental Connection or Continental Express from March 20 through June 15, 2009.

Continental Micronesia provides flight services from Saipan to Rota and Guam.

Only Continental OnePass members qualify for the offer. OnePass membership rewards customers with seat upgrades, reward travel, mileage earning opportunities, travel bonuses and preferred customer benefits, among other things.

To qualify for the promo, OnePass members simply need to register for the promotion with the provided code at continental.com to earn double Elite Qualifying Miles for all applicable travel. Registration must be completed by June 15.

"We are pleased to provide this opportunity to Continental's most loyal customers so that they may enjoy the benefits

that come with Elite status more quickly," Mark Bergsrud, Continental's senior vice president of marketing programs and distribution, said in a statement.

Special benefits are available to Continental's most frequent flyers, OnePass Elites. Bonus Elite Qualifying miles will be credited one week after the segment has been posted to the account. The offer is valid for all paid, published fares and is not valid on government fares. Elite Qualifying miles cannot be redeemed for award travel.

Double Elite Qualifying miles for this offer are two times the actual base flight miles posted to the customers account for qualifying flights taken during the promotional period.

The offer does not apply to Elite Qualifying Points, class-of-service bonus miles, class-of-service Elite Qualifying Miles, Elite bonus miles, redeemable bonus miles or promotional Elite Qualifying Miles. OnePass number must be provided prior to flight de-

parture for the trip to qualify.

For more information on the benefits of Continental's OnePass Elite status, visit continental.com.

Continental Airlines, the

world's fifth largest airline, has hubs serving New York, Houston, Cleveland and Guam, and together with Continental Express, carries approximately 67 million passengers per year.



VEGETABLES, ANYONE?

Vegetable peddler Li Bolong, 49, right, stands ready to assist a customer in Garapan. Farmers and sellers of local produce have seen a decrease in sales with the closures of garment factories whose employees used to be among the major customers for vegetables and fruits.

Sakisat backs out from senatorial bid

Two weeks after announcing his decision to run for a Senate seat on Tinian, Martin M. Sakisat yesterday backed out from the race, saying the year not "good timing" for him.

"After careful consultation with my families and friends, I have reached this very tough decision to back out ... because we feel this year is a bad timing for me," he said.

However, Sakisat said that he will consider running for the same position in the future.

He admitted that support for him at this time is inadequate. "I think the timing is not right and we need more support," he said.

Sakisat, now a Covenant

party member, reiterated his support to the re-election bid of the party's standard bearer, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Eloy Inos, in the general election.

He intends to give his full support to all the candidates to be endorsed by the party.

Sakisat ran in the midterm election as independent but was defeated by incumbent Sen. Henry San Nicolas, who is also a Covenant Party member.

Sakisat is a former classroom teacher of the Public School System and had served terms as chief of staff of former Senate President Juan S. Demapan and acting resident director of Tinian public health center.

(*Moneth Deposa*)

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
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Email: administration@cda.gov.mp • website: www.cda.gov.mp

CDA

PUBLIC NOTICE
March 24, 2009
(Amended)

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Board of Directors of the Commonwealth Development Authority thru its chairman, hereby informs the general public that the CDA Board of Directors' meeting scheduled on Thursday, March 26, 2009 is postponed until Monday, March 30, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the CDA Conference Room, Second Floor, Wakin's Building, Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Saipan. The agenda for this meeting is as follows:

AGENDA

- I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
 - 1. Roll Call
 - 2. Adoption of Agenda
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- III. REPORTS
 - 1. Financial Report-CDA
 - 2. Legal Counsel's Report
- IV. DIVISIONS/COMMITTEES
 - 1. Development Corporation Division (DCD)
 - a. Loan and Borrower's Requests
 - b. Foreclosed Properties – Proposal/Updates
 - c. Loan Receivables' Report
 - 2. DBD/Public Finance Committee
 - a. CPA-CDA Loan
 - 3. Administrative Matters/Personnel & Budget
 - 4. QC Program/Economic Development Activities
- V. OLD BUSINESS
 - 1. SBDC/Business Incubator
- VI. NEW BUSINESS
 - 1. CDA Board Resolution 2009-001
- VII. OTHER MATTERS
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session)

/s/ PEDRO I. ITIBUS
Chairman, CDA Board of Directors

DISCONNECTION NOTICE

IT&E would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on March 25th, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before March 25th.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY NOTIFICATION IT&E CUSTOMERS WILL RECEIVE*.

* You have the right to dispute this notice. You must state your claim in person or in writing no later than March 25th. You must pay any amount not in dispute to avoid disconnection. Payment denotes acceptance of all charges.

If you have questions regarding billing or service please call Customer Service at **682-4ITE (4483)** or visit our Customer Service Representatives at our Chalan Lau-Lau Office.



Scores learn how to do CPR

The American Red Cross NMI Chapter held its second annual Super CPR Saturday at the Fiesta Resort and Spa-Hibiscus Hall over the weekend. The event drew in a crowd of close to 100 participants.

The four-hour course trained participants not only in CPR but also how to handle a breathing emergency, a conscious choking victim, a cardiac emergency, and unconscious choking victims.

Students, teachers, private businesses and family members were among the many participants at the event.

At the end of the class, participants were given an American Red Cross CPR certification card valid for one year.

Red Cross executive director John Hirsh stated that the NMI community has been very supportive toward the NMI Chapter.

"Events such as this are a way of showing our gratitude toward the community. The people of the CNMI can feel safer knowing that there are an additional 100 people in the community trained in life-saving skills," he said. (ARC)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

American Red Cross instructor Lucio Aldan teaches his group how to give chest compressions and rescue breaths during the Super CPR Saturday at the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall.

BUD LIGHT
presents

Battle Readyn

SUPER FIGHT
CHARLESTON "THE PREDATOR" AIKEN (PREDATOR COMBAT)
VS.
MIKE "OGAR" DAVIS (GUAM)

MAIN EVENT
KELVIN "THE BIG HIT" (MARIANAS ELITE)
VS.
ED CARPENTER (CHICAGO)

UNDER CARD BOUTS:

LIONEL BORJA (MAR. ELITE)
VS.
SHANE CAMACHO (ZOGAI)

JAY FURBS (TRENCH TECH)
VS.
JOEL PANGELINAN (DRAGON TRIBE)

JOHN BORJA (PREDATOR COMBAT)
VS.
NEIL TAISACAN (TEAM IIAGA)

SWAIN CANGO (PREDATOR COMBAT)
VS.
VICTORINO IGITOL (ZOGAI)

FEMALE FIGHT: TARA "TARANTULA" NAUMALEG VS. KRISTI HALSTEAD

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BOR chairman urges focus on NMC's re-accreditation

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The chairman of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents appealed to members yesterday to keep their focus and positive attitude on removing the college's show-cause status and reaffirming its accreditation.

Charles Cepeda, in a letter to board members, urged that differences and conflicts between members be resolved in the proper manner so as to continue the work for accreditation compliance.

"I plead with every one of you to maintain a positive attitude in the direction of removing the NMC's show-cause status and reaffirming its accreditation. Let us work out our differences professionally and legally, without continuing to distract the hard work put forth by the students, faculty and staff to reach this goal," Cepeda told members, adding that the institution is going through "very difficult" challenges at present.

Cepeda said that addressing the concerns of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges is the priority.

The current board's main objective, he said, is centered on removing the "warning status" imposed on the college by the ACCJC. This challenge increased by more than tenfold when the ACCJC decided to stringently enforce the U.S. Board of Education's two-year limit to comply with accreditation standards.

"Today, the ACCJC has removed five of the seven main concerns that have been addressed and completed by NMC. The remaining two is perceived to only require less than 10 percent work, as time ran out to effectively complete a full circle of the undertaking. The work continues to progress to meet the new deadline for submission to the ACCJC of April 1, 2009," he said.

Cepeda admitted that NMC continues to face many issues, some of which have unnecessarily distracted from the main objective of addressing the ACCJC concerns and reaffirming the college's accreditation.

"Everyone at the college is working extremely hard to do their part in complying with WASC standards, and we as the members of the Board of Regents must ensure that we are also providing the support and assistance needed to regain accreditation reaffirmation. With that I want to take this opportunity to reemphasize the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Regents here at the college," he said.

Cepeda said that strong, effective boards help create strong, effective institutions by performing their unique fiduciary duties responsibly. "We must act as a unit, represent the common good, set policy direction, employ, support, and evaluate the president, support and advocate the interests of NMC, lead as a thoughtful, educated team, and help create a positive climate that promotes mutual respect and trust."

One of the responsibilities of the chairman of the board, he added, is to foster teamwork and to resolve problems.

He said when there are ongoing disputes that split boards, a chairman needs excellent skills in conflict resolution to prevent discord from hurting the institution.

"The board chair must occasionally remind board members of appropriate board behavior. This takes tact and courage, but it is essential for an effective board. We need to be strong and effective as a unit to represent the common good, ensure that policies are set, support our president, continue to advocate for the interest of NMC, its students, staff and faculty and set a positive climate for all," Cepeda added.

The chair recognized students who continue to support NMC by attending classes, applaud the faculty who continue to provide education to students and praised the staff who stay after work hours.



Cepeda

Island Snapshots



SPELLING WHIZ

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Derrin Pangelinan, a fourth grader of Astumbo Elementary School in Dededo, Guam, emerged as the 5th best speller in the 2009 Scripps Regional Spelling Bee recently held in Guam. Pangelinan was born and raised on Saipan and is a former student of Tanapag Elementary School. While all other four competitors were middle school students, Pangelinan was the youngest to stand amongst the five best spellers in the Bee this year. He is shown here with his Bee coach, Mrs. Acosta, and his mother, Anna Pangelinan.



TOP SPELLERS

Top spellers await the final announcement of the champion in the 2009 Scripps Spelling Bee in Guam. This year's champion is Hwang Se Young of Marianas Baptist Academy, fourth from left, followed by second place winner Kristine Leynes from Calvary Christian Academy.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dandan Elementary School principal Jonas Barcina, center, proudly poses with his student delegates to the competition.



FIELD DAY

Students enjoy playing dodge ball during a fun-filled outdoor activities in the annual Field Day held at the San Vicente Elementary School last week.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

San Vicente Elementary School students perform various outdoor activities in the baseball field during the school's annual Field Day last week.



ROAD WORKS

The Mayor's Office field operations crew resurfaces the Mt. Tapochau road in preparation for the yearly Good Friday trek.

The crew has been working on the road since last week. Thousands of island residents will bring up a big cross by foot to be venerated and installed on the top of the mountain.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy 2nd birthday to Covey Santiago Borja Mendiola, who's celebrating his special day on a Covenant Day! We wish you all the best on this auspicious occasion and pray that you will have many more to come! From daddy, mommy, your sisters Florencia, Kristina, Leagine, and Nadia, and especially from Grandma Chencha.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



A DONATION OF BAGS

Kagman Elementary School students and teachers show their appreciation to the CNMI Supreme Court for the donation of school supply bags to the students.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



VANDAL'S WORK

Saipan Mayor's Office staff Richard Cruz assigned at Sugar King Park during normal working days shows one of the guardrail pipe that has been cut off by an unknown culprit at the recently completed legacy project of Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, funded by a Community Development Block Grant to the Office of the Mayor of Saipan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BAKE SALE

The Northern Marianas College's Carolinian Cultural Club entice students and faculty with a bake sale on campus last Wednesday to raise funds for "C-Cube," which is the nickname of the club. The foods sold included brownies, lumpia, sandwiches, and other items. The funds raised from the bake sale will contribute to buying shirts for club members and to preparing for C-Cube's booth at the much anticipated NMC Charter Day.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**COMMUNITY BRIEFS****Article 12 focus of next Chamber meeting**

The next general membership meeting of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be held at the Charley's Cabaret of the Pacific Islands Club on April 1. Registration and lunch will begin at 11:30am, and the meeting will begin at noon. As usual, the meeting is \$15 for members, \$20 for guests of members, and \$25 for general public. Speakers at the meeting will be members of the Citizens for Change of Article XII group, who will discuss their efforts with regard to the land alienation laws in the Commonwealth. (PR)

Corporate Challenge reset to May 17

Due to some conflicting events, the 2009 Corporate Challenge of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce is being rescheduled. After a meeting with the team captains for the companies that already registered, it was agreed that the event will take place on Sunday, May 17. Everything else remains the same. Register now and join the Chamber for a day of guaranteed fun and camaraderie. (PR)

Live fire releases on Farallon

The U.S. military will be conducting live fire releases on the island of Farallon de Mendenilla from March 23 to 31, 2009, from 8am to 3am, and on April 1 to 3, 2009, also from 8am to 3am.

The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon de Mendenilla training area (R7201) on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, the Emergency Management Office is advising the public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

For more information, contact the EMO's Operations Section at telephone numbers 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF MARINE CHNL 16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0. (EMO)

Free Webinar on grant writing

There will be a free Webinar on grant writing that is being offered to students and early career professionals today, March 24, 2009, from 5:30am to 7am. This Webinar is courtesy of the Association of University Centers on Disability, with local coordinators NMC CDI-UCEDD program. Interested in joining? Contact John or Carol at 234-5498 ext. 1010/1019/1005. (PR)

Quarterly tax return deadline

The Division of Revenue and Taxation

wishes to remind all CNMI residents that the 2009 1st Quarter deadline for filing the quarterly tax returns is Thursday, April 30, 2009. The Division of Revenue and Taxation will be open from 7:30am to 4:30pm on Thursday, April 30, 2009. The office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation is located at the Joeten Dandan Commercial Center. For more information, call 664-1000, 664-1043 Compliance Branch, or 664-1066 Collection Branch. (PR)

CDD awards ceremony postponed

This is to inform the public that the Developmental Disabilities Award Ceremony scheduled for Friday, March 27, 2009, from 9am to 11:30am will be postponed. The new schedule will be announced at a later date. For more information, contact the Council on Developmental Disabilities office at 664-7000, 7001, 7002, or 7003. (PR)

Income tax return deadline

The Division of Revenue and Taxation wishes to inform all CNMI residents that the deadline for filing of the 2008 individual Income Tax Return is Wednesday, April 15, 2009, at the office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation located at the Joeten Dandan Commercial Center. Deadline hours for April 15, 2009, are from 7:30am to 4:30pm. (PR)

Pre-economic summit sessions set

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is reminding the public of the upcoming Economic Restoration Summit, set for April 2-3, 2009. In preparation for the Summit, there will be a meeting on March 26 for government officials to gather preliminary information and ideas. It will be held at the Multi-Purpose Center, from 8:30am to 12pm. The session will be broadcast through video teleconference to Rota and Tinian participants. (PR)

Red Cross Walkathon set

The 23rd Annual American Red Cross Walkathon will be held on March 28, at 6am, starting at the 4H Building on Beach Road in Susupe.

Register for \$15 and receive a free t-shirt. Walkers start at the designated starting point, then walk north toward the Garapan Fishing Base, then back to Susupe.

Drinks and sandwiches will be available at the start and finish points, and along the routes. Protect yourselves, the young and the old by following the directions of the safety officers. Prizes are available and have been generously donated by the business community. For more information contact

the Red Cross Chapter at 234-3459. (PR)

Saipan Southern PTA meeting

To all parents and legal guardians of Saipan Southern High School: There will be a PTA meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2009, at 6pm in the cafeteria. (PR)

Marianas High School schedule

March 24: No classes (Commonwealth Covenant Day)
April 6-7: 3rd Quarter Final Exams
April 8: 4th Quarter begins
April 9-13: Easter break
April 27-May 1: SAT10 Tests (Grade 9-11)
May 4-15: Advanced Placement Exams
May 18-22: PSS SBA Tests
May 25: No classes (Memorial Day)
June 11: Graduation Ceremony
June 15: End of 4th Quarter
For questions and concerns, contact 237-3206. (PR)

KagES sets cultural day fest

The Kagman Elementary School will be hosting its 9th Annual Cultural Day Festivities on March 28, 2009, Saturday, at the campus grounds, from 8:30am to 3pm. Everyone is welcome to attend; bring the whole family. (PR)

Marianas High School schedule

Mar. 24: No classes (Commonwealth Covenant Day)
For questions and concerns, contact 237-3206. (PR)

Marriage Encounter Weekend set

Help turn a good marriage into a great marriage through a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend! The CNMI's next Marriage Encounter Weekend will be held on March 27-29, 2009 at the Saipan Grand Hotel. Cost is \$50 per couple.

For further information or a registration form, contact any of the following individuals:

- Jun and Linda Pangelinan, 483-4111, linpangelinan@gmail.com;
- Tony and Lynne Yarobwemal, 234-5053, tony822@gmail.com;
- Mark and Jenni Aguon, 287-9742, markaguon@gmail.com and apakaaguon@yahoo.com;
- John and Vicki Mafnas, 285-8454, vbmfnas@yahoo.com;

You may also contact the ecclesiastical team/executive board members:

- Fr. Ike Ayuyu, 285-9324, ike@ayuyu.us;
- Charles and Cathy Cepeda, 483-6435, charlesvcepeda@gmail.com or nannakit@hotmail.com. (PR)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

March 24, 1999**Accounting firm seeks reforms**

Amid efforts to diversify the CNMI economy, an economic development council composed of members from the private sector and government appointees must be established to help identify what types of industries the CNMI needs to attract, according to David Burger, director of Burger & Comer accounting firm. With the governor's approval, the council may be given the authority to enter into long-term binding contracts with investors so that businessmen are assured of obtaining a reasonable rate of return from their investments. In order for it to be effective, membership in the council should be diversified.

Ex-governor unleashes diatribe

Calling the Legislature anti-business, former governor Froilan C. Tenorio yesterday said CNMI lawmakers should resign for failing to assist the private sector in dealing with the economic slump. "They don't have business staying in the Legislature. They should resign and not consider running again," Tenorio said in an interview. "The public is paying their salaries but they are not doing anything to alleviate the situation." According to the former CNMI leader, a number of measures passed by the Legislature have made it more difficult for businessmen to cope with the worsening economic condition in the Northern Marianas.

March 24, 2000**CNMI joins fight vs Internet fraud**

With Northern Marianas residents accounting for big volume of imported items purchased from the mainland United States through electronic commerce, the CNMI government is joining hands with close to 20 countries in a global fight against Internet shopping scam. This effort is the largest ever international law enforcement project aimed at discouraging e-commerce swindlers from victimizing an emerging market of millions of Internet shoppers around the world. The project is being advanced by a strong coalition of 143 organizations from 27 countries around the world, including seven U.S. federal agencies, 49 state and local consumer protection agencies and 39 Better Business Bureaus. Internet-related auction frauds are regarded by federal authorities as the fastest-growing type of fraud in the country.

Trade programs in NMC urged

In line with the government's economic diversification and revitalization plans, Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday underscored the value of institutionalizing academic programs aimed at developing local skills on trade and business management. Mr. Tenorio challenged Northern Marianas College officials and faculty to take aggressive steps in improving trade and vocational programs offered at the Commonwealth's only higher-learning institution. He made the call during the formal declaration of April as the Northern Marianas College Month, in accordance with its proclamation in the United States as the National Community College month.

March 24, 2003**'Covenant doesn't exempt NMI from federal wire fraud'**

The Covenant granting self-governance to the CNMI does not make the federal wire fraud statute inapplicable to the islands. This was how the U.S. Attorney's Office debunked the claim of embattled senators Ricardo Atalig and Jose M. Dela Cruz that their indictments on 26 criminal counts of wire fraud and a count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud violated the Covenant's provisions on self-government that includes independence of the CNMI Legislature. Dela Cruz's daughter, Marjorie, also stands charged with the same offenses in federal court. Assistant U.S. Attorneys John Rice and Patrick Smith said Atalig—represented by former Senate legal counsel Stephen C. Woodruff—failed to mention that the Covenant itself provides for the applicability of federal laws, which include those in existence when the provision became effective on January 9, 1978.

Domestic abuse cases higher than reported

The reported number of domestic violence cases in the Northern Marianas remains less than the actual numbers due to refusal of spouses to file formal complaints against their abusive husbands. Prosecution cases against abusers remain below the actual numbers and only a few are being meted out with corresponding sentences, a report on domestic abuse in the Commonwealth disclosed. In year 2002, the Department of Public Safety responded to 284 domestic disturbance complaints. Of this, the Attorney General's Office reported 135 reports received. Of the 135 reports, 87 resulted in charges filed but only 32 convictions were made as of December 31, 2002. Of the 32 convictions, only 22 resulted in any jail time for the defendant.

Pacific

Unprecedented spending on Micronesia flood disaster

December floods caused 'enormous' damage

POHNPEI, Federated States of Micronesia (Kaselehlie Press/PIR)—When early December flood waters washed across FSM's low outer islands the damage was enormous. The ocean, when it receded brought home with it

large portions of the shorelines of those islands. Retaining walls designed to hold off the sea were in left in ruins. Most importantly, taro patches and other crops were inundated with salt water and lay scorching in the sun. Relief was

required for islanders whose food supplies were damaged or even destroyed.

Governors from each of the states issued declarations of emergency. Some FSM states were later than others in declaring a state of emergency due to technical communications problems and other problems of human error but as soon as the last state declared the emergency, the President of the FSM declared a state of emergency for the nation and monetary aid flowed. It flowed not only from countries interested in the development of the FSM but it flowed from within from the FSM General Fund.

Before the disaster occurred the FSM Congress passed a \$1.4 million appropriations bill for public projects, an amount equal to \$100,000 per senator in the FSM Congress in order to fund projects in each of the senators' home states. The bill detailed the projects that would be

funded in each FSM state. President Mori vetoed that bill saying that there were other more pressing needs in the FSM. He prepared an alternative bill and submitted it to the Congress. In the face of the emergency, on Jan. 6, 2009 Congress overrode the veto.

A committee report from the Ways and Means Committee said the override was the fastest way to provide financial resources for the emergency in the outer islands.

"The amount appropriated by this bill of \$1.4 million represents the sense of Congress as to the maximum that the President should spend under the declaration of emergency at this time," the report said.

On Jan. 9, three days after the Congress override of his veto, Mori issued a decree that allowed him to spend the money he needed from the FSM General Fund in order to meet the demands foisted upon the FSM by the whim of the Pacific Ocean. At press time, all but \$406,000 of the \$1.4 million appropriation had been spent.

The intent of the Congress override was apparently not communicated well with the election district offices in the states. As early as Jan. 12, three days after the presidential decree, election district officials in Chuuk began to submit Project Control Documents for projects thinking that the Congress override of the President's veto meant that their projects would be funded by the law. Because of the presidential emergency decree, those PCDs were returned to the election districts where they originated, much to the consternation of the officials there. A Congress press release said that the congressional override of Mori's veto provided \$1.4 million for the emergency. It did do that but according to FSM law the Executive Branch must replenish the funds that it used for the emergency. According to Speaker Figir, the most recent report submitted by the FSM Office of Statistics, Budget and Overseas Coordination said that the FSM General Fund has a remaining balance of \$350,000.

3rd Guam Industry Forum attendance nears capacity

SANTA RITA, Guam—With just over a month before the opening plenary session, the third Guam Industry Forum is nearing capacity.

Slated for April 28, 29, and 30, the Guam Industry Forum is the third in a series of industry forums related to the design, construction and logistics required to support the relocation of the U.S. Marines from Okinawa, Japan to Guam.

The Forum will be spread between the Sheraton, Hilton, and Marriott hotels. As in the past two Forums, the live presentations will alternate between the three venues but will be simulcast in real time at all locations to allow for full participation by all attendees.

Agenda topics include acquisition strategies, workforce housing and logistics, sustainable design, and many others.

"We urge anyone who is considering attending the Forum to register right away," said Capt. Neil Ruggiero, public affairs officer for the Joint Guam Program Office. "This event provides an excellent opportunity to gain updates on the overall program planning efforts, as well as to network with potential business partners from the local, mainland and international business communities."

Information on the Forum and registration can be found at www.guamindustryforum.com. (PR)

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Two Vanuatu MPs face charges

PORT VILA, Vanuatu (Vanuatu Daily Post/PIR)—Efate MP Joshua Kalsakau and Port Vila MP Ralph Regenvanu have pleaded not guilty on separate charges under two different cases that the Supreme Court heard on Friday afternoon. Kalsakau was charged on three counts of sexual intercourse without consent, attempted incest, and act of indecent assault. During the Supreme Court hearing, the Efate MP pleaded not guilty to all counts against him. Regenvanu's case involves the issue of inmates at the correctional facility. The Port Vila MP pleaded not guilty to three counts of accessory after the fact, harboring or assisting a prisoner and obstructing police officers on duty. While Regenvanu also remains on bail conditions, he will reappear in Court on May 13.

gress's Speaker Isaac Figir that he was washing his hands of the bill by letting it become law without his signature.

PNG speaker stepping aside

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)—Speaker Jeffrey Nape yesterday stunned Parliament when he announced that he was taking "recreational leave." Nape said he was taking leave to allow investigations into the financial affairs of Parliament. Because Members of Parliament cannot take recreational leave, Nape's announcement was understood to mean that he was stepping aside. *The National* understands that political pressure from the ruling National Alliance caucus forced Nape to make a sudden announcement on the floor of Parliament yesterday morning.

Somare updated on natural gas project

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)—Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare and members of Parliament have been updated on the progress of the country's major liquefied natural gas (LNG) project. ExxonMobil yesterday held the briefing at National Parliament's State function room, locked away from the media and others members of the public. The National managed to get the talking points which took up three elements of the project's national content. Exxon Mobil through its subsidiary company and project developer Esso Highlands Ltd, would create jobs and train people needed for the construction, drilling and for future operations. ExxonMobil also discussed various aspects of skill-transfer to locals and community infrastructure development.



QUAD TALKS

Rear Adm. Manson Brown, left, commander of the Fourteenth Coast Guard District, talks with delegates from Australia, New Zealand and France during the third Coast Guard-led Quad Talks at Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Wednesday, March 18, 2009. The goal of the Quad Talks is to strengthen maritime security in the Pacific Ocean through improved maritime domain awareness and law enforcement.

U.S. COAST GUARD/PA3 ANGELA HENDERSON

Japan posts ambassador to Tonga

First embassy and ambassador in Polynesia

NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga (Matangi Tonga/PIR)—Tonga's first Resident Japanese Ambassador, HE Mr Yasuo Takase presented his Letters of Credence to HM King George Tupou V at the Consular House on Monday, March 18.

The Ambassador who arrived in Tonga on March 14 heads the first Japanese Embassy in Nuku'alofa, with nine staff members including four Japanese and five Tongans.

The Embassy has a temporary of-

fice at the Lagoon Lodge, 'Umusi, since it was opened on January 1, but will move to a permanent office at the top floor of the National Reserve Bank Building in May.

Fisheries

Before Ambassador Yasuo Takase was appointed to Tonga he was the Director of the Fishery Division and Deputy Director General of the Economic Affairs, a position he held since August 2008.

Ambassador Yasuo Takase is a graduate of Tokyo University and he has a wealth of experience in diplomatic and international affairs after holding positions as First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Zambia in 1993.

He was also the Director of Fishery Division and Ocean Division of the Japan Economic Affairs Bureau from 1996-99.

In 2000-02 he was the Counsellor of the Embassy of Japan in Norway and Nigeria and was the Director General of the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Department, Interchange Association in Tokyo in 2004.

The Ambassador was also a Senior Regional Coordinator; Second Middle East Division, Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau in August 2007.

The Japanese Tongan Embassy is its first in Polynesia. In the past the Japanese Embassy in Suva, served Tonga and several other Pacific Islands countries.

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Red ink red alert

The new estimates by the Congressional Budget Office showing a federal deficit of 13.1 percent of gross domestic product for the current budget year, which began Oct. 1, are neither surprising nor particularly alarming, though it's larger than the 12.3 percent foreseen by the White House. Both are stunning numbers—far and away the largest deficit ratio since World War II. But spending rises in recessions and tax revenue falls, and we're in a big recession. It would be counterproductive to balance the budget in this historic downturn. The huge deficit includes \$700 billion for a necessary rescue of the financial sector. Nor is it shocking that the CBO forecasts a deficit of 9.6 percent of GDP in fiscal 2010 if Congress enacts President Obama's \$3.6 trillion budget plan—a deficit also much larger than what the president predicted. The difference largely reflects the CBO's economic forecast, which is more up-to-date and, hence, gloomier than the one Mr. Obama relied on.

What is scary, though, is the CBO's depiction of the remaining years of the president's term, and the half-decade after that—if his budget is enacted. In none of those years would the federal deficit fall below 4.1 percent of GDP—and it would be stuck at 5.7 percent of GDP in 2019. This is in stark contrast to the president's projection: that his plan would get the deficit down to about 3 percent or so of GDP by that time. It's true, as Peter R. Orszag, director of the Office of Management and Budget, told us, that the CBO's forecasts are subject to large margins of error, especially in the out years. And Mr. Orszag is correct to point out that, even under the CBO's scenario, the deficit as a share of GDP would decline by half under Mr. Obama.

Still, it's less significant to meet that target than to keep the deficits within sustainable bounds, and few experts believe that years of deficits above 4 percent of GDP are consistent with long-term economic vitality. If the CBO's numbers are subject to revision on account of changing circumstances, then so are the administration's; and those were based on very rosy economic assumptions to begin with. Very little of the claimed deficit reduction in the Obama plan comes from policy changes; it results more or less automatically from the assumed end of the recession, as well as by claiming savings in reducing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from unrealistically high forecasts. Yet both the White House and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that the CBO report is no reason to revise the president's ambitious tax and spending blueprint.

Mr. Obama should treat the CBO report as an incentive to fulfill his repeated promises, during and after the campaign, to make hard choices on the budget. Until now he has offered a host of new spending—on health care, middle-class tax cuts, education and alternative energy—without calling for much sacrifice from anyone except the top 5 percent of the income scale. Though his emphasis on controlling health-care costs is welcome, it's not a substitute for reforming the entitlement programs that are the drivers of long-term fiscal crisis, Medicare and Social Security. Yet the president has offered no plan for either and no road map even for achieving a plan. Several members of his own party in the Senate have been expressing doubts about his strategy, and the CBO report will lend credibility to their concerns. He should heed them.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Brackins RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH
3/09

Reflections for Covenant Day 2009

Thirty-three years ago, on March 24, 1976, President Ford signed the Joint Resolution enacted by the United States Congress that approved the status agreement governing the relationship between the United States and the future Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It was called the "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America."

The Commonwealth today is suffering from a serious economic depression. We are engaged in litigation with the federal government regarding the meaning of "local self-government." Nonetheless, we celebrate this day as United States citizens free to enjoy the benefits, and to assume the responsibilities, set forth in the Covenant.

As has been recognized by the United States courts, this Commonwealth enjoys a "unique" political status under the American flag. The Northern Marianas were not conquered, annexed, or purchased by the United States. The Covenant is the result of more than 20 years of political campaigning by our ancestors seeking a political relationship with the United States. It is the result of more than two years of serious negotiations between the Marianas Political Status Commission and a United States delegation. It is the result of careful scrutiny by the United States Congress, followed by its approval and submission to President Ford. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our political leaders of the 1960s and 1970s for their efforts in achieving our current political status.

Section 103 of the Covenant provides that "The people of the Northern Mariana Islands will have the right of local self-government and will govern themselves with respect to internal affairs in accordance with a Constitution of their own adoption." This section is protected by the mutual consent provision of the Covenant from any unilateral change by the federal government.

The United States Congress recognized the importance of local self-government to the future Commonwealth. The 1975 Senate Report (at pages 58-59) stated that it was agreed

"...that certain specifically designated provisions of the new agreement designed to assure maximum self-government for the future Commonwealth of the Marianas would not be amended or repealed except by mutual consent of the parties. To this extent the exercise of United States plenary authority in the Marianas would be voluntarily limited. The Status Agreement would be drafted so as to reflect clearly the intention of the United States and the Marianas Political Status Commission that this undertaking would be enforceable in the federal courts."

By BENIGNO R. FITIAL
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Benigno R. Fitial is the governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.



The Senate Report (at page 67) goes on to say:

"The idea underlying this [mutual consent] provision is that the political status of the Northern Mariana Islands has been agreed upon by a negotiating process and Congress undertakes not to modify its fundamental provisions unilaterally. This obligation does not derogate from United States sovereignty. To the contrary, it is an incident thereof."

The concept of "local self-government"—like most constitutional terms—may be defined in many different ways. One definition drawn from international law seems particularly applicable to this Commonwealth. It provides that among the "minimum" attributes of self-government is that "a locally elected body" possess power to legislate with respect to matters such as "health, education, social services, local taxation, internal trade and commerce, environmental protection, zoning, and local government structure and organization: and that its decisions within those realms should "not be subject to veto by the principal/sovereign government unless those decisions exceed its competence or are otherwise inconsistent with basic constitutional precepts."

Our political leaders who negotiated the Covenant were drawn from the two political parties of the time. Fourteen of the 15 members were experienced politicians; some had run against each other in various elections. In dealing with the federal government, however, they put aside their political differences and spoke with a unified voice on behalf of the Northern Marianas people. We would not have a Covenant today if they had not done so.

We urge everyone in the Commonwealth to take a few moments today to reflect on our Covenant and to renew our commitment to understand, explain, and defend our status agreement with the United States. During this year's Covenant Day holiday, we re-affirm our commitment to the promise of the Covenant: meaningful local self-government and a higher standard of living through economic growth and development.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The United States' geopolitical & strategic interest in the NMI

A personal view of historical perspective during the Cold War

Last of a two-part series

Unique relationship with the United States

For a nation to acquire additional territory, a government must either annex an area by force of arms or by purchase from a sovereign government.

The Northern Marianas was not a permanent legal possession of Japan at the time of the war as it had only been entrusted to Japan under a mandate by a group of countries through their organization—the League of Nations. Therefore, the United States could not strip territory from defeated Japan at the conclusion of hostilities in 1945 since the islands were never recognized as a permanent legal possession of Japan in the first place.

The unique relationship between the United States government and the Commonwealth stems from the fact that the islands were never recognized as a permanent possession of any nation since they were taken from defeated Germany by the Allied Powers during World War I. Subsequently assigned to Japan under a mandate from the League of Nations, the islands' status did not change after they were occupied by United States armed forces in 1944. Indeed, since their purchase by Germany from Spain in 1899, and their assignment to Japan for administration in 1920 by the League of Nations, the Northern Marianas had no political identity among the countries of the world.

From the time of Germany's loss of the islands they were never regarded by the United States as a permanent colony within the exclusive sovereignty of any nation, (except, of course, by Japan when it left the League before the outbreak of World War II).

At the conclusion of the Second World War the United States, not desiring to appear as having annexed the islands by virtue of

"victor's rights," placed them under the supervision of the Security Council of the newly formed United Nations. As the Marianas were considered to be within a strategic area of the western Pacific they were to be overseen through the Security Council where the United States had veto power, rather than the U.N. General Assembly.

Until 1944 the former Japanese Mandated Islands consisted of the island groups of the Western Carolines (Palau, now Belau and Yap); the Eastern Carolines (Truk, now Chuuk; Kusaie, now Kosrae); Pohnpei (Senyavin Island), the Marshall Islands and the Northern Marianas.

Later, under a Trusteeship Agreement with the United Nations, the area became known as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (the U.S. Territory of Guam was never a part of the Trust Territory). Negotiations for self-government, and thus eventual termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, first began in 1970.

The people of the Northern Marianas were encouraged to choose their future political status from several options. These included independence or becoming affiliated with the United States, either through a relationship of free association or a commonwealth status based upon a negotiated agreement. This later became known as the Covenant, which describes the relationship agreed upon between the people of the Northern Marianas and the United States government.

The people of the Northern Marianas were the first of all the former Trust Territory entities to decide their future political identity. They decided to enter into a Commonwealth arrangement in political union with the United States. In all of the former Japanese Mandated Islands within Micronesia, they were the only island group to seek such a close political arrangement with America.

In June 1975 the people of the Northern Marianas elected to accept a negotiated Covenant with the United States. While U.S.

By WILLIAM H. STEWART

Special to the *Saipan Tribune*

William H. Stewart is an economist and military historical cartographer



citizens residing in the Commonwealth are denied the right to vote in presidential elections, since January 2009 they have been ably represented in the United States Congress by their elected representative, Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan.

No other United States territory or insular possession has a similar relationship with the United States as does the Northern Marianas. Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Guam were all acquired under circumstances far different than that of the NMI.

U.S./CNMI citizen residents can only vote in United States national elections if they are registered as a voter in the United States and vote by either absentee ballot or while present in the U.S. during an election.

Editor's note: Prior to service with the U.S. Department of State, the author studied the economics of national security from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (now the National Defense University). He is a recipient of the Department of Defense "Cold War Certificate" for services rendered to the U.S. government. During his tenure in the Pacific area he has served as senior economist for the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and later for the Northern Marianas, Palau and Truk.

Games in the House of Horus

Psychiatrist Eric Berne, MD, published in 1964 a book titled *Games People Play*, subtitled *The Psychology of Human Relationships*. In it, Berne introduces a method called transactional analysis which helps interpret and categorizes functional and dysfunctional social interactions.

Berne takes off from Freud's psychodynamic model, particularly the "ego states" (Freud's terms: the it, the I, and the above-I, translated as id, ego, and superego) and transcribed the same into three roles—the Child, the Parent and the Adult. This theory influenced fellow psychiatrist James Redfield's entertaining and highly successful self-published book *Celestine Prophecy*, elevating the states into the metaphysical realm.

No longer tasked with ensuring the Earth's fertility, the contemporary daughters of the House of Horus have basic roles to play, primarily initiated in the islands' watering holes but accessible through other service venues such as barbershops and beauty parlors, hotel lobbies and parking lots, poker rooms and Internet arcades, music rooms and karaoke bars, even parish Masses and fiestas.

Sociologists have long noted the Victorian aversion to pleasure and often make the distinction between the American bar and the Canadian pub. Ale is served in both but where the watering holes south of the 49th parallel are often shrouded in the shadows and low lights, the pubs across the border are well lit and are often the site of rowdy crowds gathering in a community node specially after a curling match in the winter.

Similarly, the games local people play on Saipan are in the dark rooms of poker parlors and cubicle'd karaoke bars. The adrenaline high yearned for by many in the poker room where the religious still rely on miracles though the odds with the one-arm bandits is

stacked against the player, the addiction adhered to is on the elusive hope, leaving the rationality of statistical expectations to the sane who does not bother to cross the threshold. Besides, if one already sold one's soul to the food stamp store, one pleasures one's longing in the electronic box that glitters with false promises while one's laundry spins in the washer and dryer next door.

The enterprising lady of the night often has contact inside the poker room should anyone hit a jackpot and decide to spend the winnings on a quickie before heading home.

Among the menfolk, especially those born from the '60s onward, when groin-centered lifestyles rose, and if Clinton, Jackson and Spitzer are any indication, became normative, and the sex manual on the book shelves became as ubiquitous as the cookbook, the pleasure of the crotch commercially followed the roller coaster ride of supply and demand.

The CNMI boom of the '80s and the early '90s attracted working girls from Mabini in Manila, Olongapo of the Navy yards and Angeles of the Air Fields, to Saipan. Saigon and Seoul were not far behind, and the tentacles of both the Yakuza of Ginza and the Fujian Tongs of Xiamen reached far and wide. Sisterhood from Kowloon and Taipei chimed into the flesh trade and the foreign-flavored spiced meat offering of Garapan was born. Certain games are for sale for those who wish to play.

Contact point for the current human meat market remains that of the watering holes. Buy the lady a drink and graduate smoothly into logistics' negotiations. Enterprising ladies walk the streets around the DFS Galleria, the two-block environs of the Paseo, and the side streets of the area where the appropriately named streets Dama de Noche and Flores Rosa mirror the jaded flowers plying their trade

system come June 1, 2009.

We ask you this, congressman: What is it that you are not telling us? Well over two decades the warnings of a federal takeover has been an issue with members of U.S. Congress, but did any of you do anything to correct the loopholes and flaws of our immigration and labor system? Once you were an elected official in our Legislature and until recently you were with the Commission on Elections and for many years you had known about the corruption and backdoor political influences in our immigration and labor system. Today, as our Washington delegate, you asking for additional time to further hamper the much needed immigration and labor reform in our homeland. Why? Please understand this is by no means a personal matter but we are stating the true facts on the issues surrounding the federal takeover. We would like a clearer and honest opinion from you as our U.S. Delegate.

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

By JAIME VERGARA

Special to the *Saipan Tribune*

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section.



on its corners and sidewalks. The higher end demand is accessible through hotel lobby personnel and security guards, with the low end tourists often the object of the tsunami-like phenomenon of three cars unloading be-decked and perfumed ladies into a restaurant for the client's visual picking.

The increase of neophytes into the profession in the last eight years brought about by the demise of the garment industry increased possible STD spread through a training gap of newcomers. Mama-sans often just hand out a copy of a porn DVD to an aspiring recruit, with instructions to imitate what is visually portrayed in the medium. Non-prophylactic-protected incidences have made the practitioner and recipient susceptible to STD transmittal. Accurate numbers on AIDS/HIV occurrences are hard to come by, so one can only air a word of caution on those who can influence this particular behavior. I would imagine that DoD, MVA, DoH, and the ethnic newspapers could very well publicize practices of "safe sex" to their constituent audiences, and impose their own accountability measures.

The other health issue that has emerged among the Chinese ladies is the widely practiced drug-induced abortion with dire consequences on the lady's health and well-being. There is a substantial portion of the client population that demands unprotected sex, and are willing to pay for it. Unfortunately, the cost is often higher than the temporary high.

"Hooker" is not a labor category that is licensed so practitioners are often ID'd as commercial cleaners, waitresses, masseuse, house workers, and lately, students. For the moment, we also have a lot of hangers-on of people with unresolved labor cases who are available service providers for the trade, stay in legal hiatus until they see how the federal takeover influences their status. Sadly, the widespread proliferation of inaccurate information is reportedly abetted by well-intentioned spouses of highly-placed government personnel.

The process of decriminalizing previously condemned practices like the use of cannabis is a character of our times, even as Nevada pioneered "cowtown" bordellos within its boundaries. Why not extend the same to Ma Lee of Mariana, and get a flourishing and critical component of our visitors' industry into the realm of intentionality, regulations, and management under the rational light of day? Let's get some sane Dicks in the House!

Letter to the Editor

Why delay federalization?

Congressman Kilili: With all due respect, what is a 180-delay or six months going to do? In our view, a delay or no delay makes no difference, unless you are hoping for some sort of a blanket amnesty, which we all know is not going to take place. Maria Therese Sebretchets, regional media manager of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Michael Aytes, acting deputy director Department of Homeland Security, would have had the authorization of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano to respond in the manner they did, when they answered all questions and uncertainties on the federal takeover of our immigration

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly sunny with a slight chance of showers. Light southeast winds.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers in the afternoon. East winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers in the afternoon.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Rain	▲83 ▼74
Palau	Showers	▲87 ▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲88 ▼77
Pohnpei	Rain	▲82 ▼77
Kosrae	Partly Sunny	▲88 ▼75
Majuro	Showers	▲85 ▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲67 ▼55
Beijing	Sunny	▲55 ▼32
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲77 ▼66
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲78 ▼68
London	Showers	▲50 ▼46
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲74 ▼52
Manila	Cloudy	▲88 ▼75
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲79 ▼65
Miami	Showers	▲79 ▼67
New York	Sunny	▲46 ▼35
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲51 ▼36
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲50 ▼38
Pusan	Sunny	▲52 ▼28
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	▲53 ▼38
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲53 ▼38
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲64 ▼50
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲41 ▼28
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲55 ▼37
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲49 ▼36

Tides

Saipan Harbor		Sunrise/Sunset		Moonrise/Moonset			
12:12 AM Today	Low Tide: 0.2 Feet	Today	6:19 AM	6:28 PM	Today	4:24 AM	4:24 PM
6:45 AM Today	High Tide: 1.8 Feet	Wednesday	6:18 AM	6:29 PM	Wednesday	5:01 AM	5:14 PM
12:44 PM Today	Low Tide: 0.8 Feet	Thursday	6:17 AM	6:29 PM	Thursday	5:38 AM	6:05 PM
6:10 PM Today	High Tide: 1.8 Feet	Friday	6:16 AM	6:29 PM	Friday	6:16 AM	6:58 PM
		Saturday	6:16 AM	6:29 PM	Saturday	6:57 AM	7:54 PM

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Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

BUSINESS

Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

SAMUT SARI

Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

TRAVELOGUE

Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan.

To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 12, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO9597 11:50am 12:25pm 1,7

Saipan-Guam

CO9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily
CO9318 8:30am 9:20am Daily
CO9597 11:50am 1:20pm 1,7 via Rota
CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6
CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily
CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily
CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099 5:00am 7:35am Daily
NW 078 8:20am 1:30pm 2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075 4:55pm 7:30pm Daily

Guam-Narita

NW 73 4:10pm 7:00pm Daily
NW 81 3:55pm 6:55pm Daily

Saipan-Osaka

OZ 119 4:00am 6:40am 1,4,6

Guam-Osaka

NW 79 4:45pm 7:35pm Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078 8:20am 11:05am Daily

Guam-Nagoya

NW 23 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily

Saipan-Incheon

OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1
OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119 4:00am 11:25am 1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606 3:20pm 7:00pm Daily

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608 3:20am 6:50am 1,4,5,7

Saipan-Shanghai

FM 844 2:50am 5:40am 2,6

Rota-Guam

CO 9597 12:50pm 1:20pm 1,7

Guam-Palau

CO 953 7:40pm 8:40pm 1,7

CO 893 5:50pm 6:50pm 3,5

Palau-Manila

CO 893 7:35pm 9:10pm 3,5

Guam-Manila

CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 3,5 via Koror
CO 933 8:00pm 9:40pm Daily
PR 111 6:00am 7:50am 1,2,4,6,7

Nagoya-Manila

NW 71 8:40pm 11:55pm Daily

Incheon-Hongkong

OZ 721 9:20am 12:00pm Daily
OZ 723 7:45pm 10:35pm Daily
OZ 7173 8:00pm 10:50pm 5,7

Narita-Manila

NW 1 7:00pm 10:55pm Daily

Manila-Nagoya

NW 72 6:30am 11:05am Daily

Hongkong-Incheon

OZ 724 12:30am 4:50am Daily
OZ 7183 12:45am 5:05am 1,4,6
OZ 722 1:30pm 5:45pm Daily

Manila-Narita

NW 2 7:45am 12:40pm Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline ETD ETA Frequency

Guam-Rota

FRE 113 11:40am 11:50am Daily

FRE 100 7:00am 7:30am Daily

Rota-Saipan

Business

GOP predicts doomsday if Obama budget passed

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Asian stocks rise on US plan, Japan stimulus hopes

HONG KONG (AP)—Asian stocks rose strongly Monday ahead of a U.S. announcement to buy up as much as \$1 trillion in toxic bank assets and as Japan signaled more stimulus measures to resuscitate the world's second-largest economy. Tokyo shares led the region's gains, with the country's benchmark hitting a six-week high, after Japan's finance minister said aggressive public spending to the tune 20 trillion yen (\$208 billion) might be needed to end the country's painful recession. Investors also were eyeing the U.S., where the Obama administration is set to unveil Monday its latest effort to heal the hard-hit financial sector and restore bank and consumer lending. The government is expected to create a new government entity, the Public-Private Investment Program, to clear from bank balance sheets up to \$1 trillion in souring securities and loans at the root of the global financial crisis.

Oil climbs above \$52 in Asia on stock market rally

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Oil prices rose above \$52 a barrel Monday in Asia, boosted by stronger Asian stock markets amid plans by the U.S. government to buy bad assets from banks to contain the financial crisis. Benchmark crude for May delivery rose 45 cents to \$52.52 a barrel by midday in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract edged up 3 cents on Friday to settle at \$52.07, the first time crude ended the week above \$50 since last year. Dealers said the rally, which was given an extra boost by the U.S. Federal Reserve's decision to buy \$1.25 trillion of government bonds and mortgage-backed securities, continued Monday as Asian equity markets rose in anticipation of more good news. But some cautioned the advance may not be sustainable as global oil demand remains weak.

Daimler to sell near \$2.7B in shares to Abu Dhabi

BERLIN (AP)—Abu Dhabi is poised to become the biggest shareholder in Daimler AG after the German maker of luxury cars, buses and trucks said it would sell nearly euro2 billion (\$2.72 billion) in shares to the country's Aabar Investments PJSC. In a statement released Sunday by the Stuttgart-based company, Daimler said Aabar will buy 96.4 million new Daimler shares at a price of euro20.27 (\$27.87) each, which is slightly below the euro21.34 shares fetched at the close of trading Friday in Frankfurt. The move will give Aabar a 9.1 percent stake in Daimler, bigger than the 6.9 percent stake held by Kuwait. Aabar's biggest shareholder is the International Petroleum Investment Co., which in turn is owned by the Abu Dhabi government.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congressional Republicans on Sunday predicted a doomsday scenario of crushing debt and eventual federal bankruptcy if President Barack Obama's massive spending blueprint wins passage.

But a White House adviser dismissed the negative assessments, saying she is "incredibly confident" that the president's policies will "do the job" for the economy.

In a TV interview, Obama himself laughed when discussing the dire state of parts of the economy—and ascribed his laughter to "gallows humor."

White House Council of Economic Advisers chairwoman Christina Romer insisted that the nation's flailing economy will be rebounding by 2010.

Administration officials—and the president himself—have taken a cheerier tone despite economic indicators that are anything but positive.

"I have every expectation, as do private forecasters, that we will bottom out this year and actually be growing again by the end of the year," Romer said.

The president, in an interview that aired Sunday on CBS News' "60 Minutes," talked about the need to spend taxpayer money to save financial firms and the auto industry.

"I just want to say that the only thing less popular than putting money into banks is putting money into the auto industry," Obama said with a laugh.

Interviewer Steve Kroft asked how that laughter might be perceived, given the economy's troubles.



trillion annual deficits and a weakened dollar if Obama and his Democratic allies get their proposed \$3.6 trillion budget plan passed. "The practical implications of this is bankruptcy for the United States," said Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H. "There's no other way around it. If we maintain the proposals which are in this budget over the 10-year period that this budget covers, this country will go bankrupt. People will not buy our debt; our dollar will become devalued."

Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican who sided with Obama on his \$787 billion economic stimulus plan, said she couldn't support the White House plan this time.

"It would double the public debt in 5 years, triple it in 10 years. ... That is not sustainable. It poses a threat to the basic health of our economy," Collins said.

Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama, the top Republican on the banking committee, said Obama would have to scale back his budget, given a Congressional Budget Office report Friday that the president's budget would produce \$9.3 trillion in deficits over the next decade—more than four times the deficits of Republican George W. Bush's presidency.

Shelby predicted that number could reach \$20 trillion in coming years as Obama guides the country to "the fast road to financial destruction."

The CBO predicted a deficit of \$2.3 trillion worse than what the administration projected. Romer downplayed those numbers.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner looks on as President Barack Obama makes remarks on AIG, Wednesday, March 18, 2009, on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, prior to departing for a trip to California.

"There's got to be a little gallows humor to get you through the day," Obama said. "If you had said to us a year ago that the least of my problems would be Iraq, which is still a pretty

serious problem, I don't think anybody would have believed it."

Republicans say Obama's budget is no laughing matter.

Senate Republicans predicted \$20

Treasury's toxic asset plan could cost \$1 trillion

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration's latest attempt to tackle the banking crisis and get loans flowing to families and businesses will create a new government entity, the Public-Private Investment Program, to help purchase as much as \$1 trillion in toxic assets on banks' books.

The new effort, to be unveiled Monday, will be followed the next day with release of the administration's broad framework for overhauling the financial system to ensure that the current crisis—the worst in seven decades—is not repeated.

A key part of that regulatory framework will give the government new resolution authority to take over troubled institutions that would pose a threat to the entire financial system if they failed.

Administration officials believe this new power will save taxpayers money and avoid the type of controversy that erupted last week when insurance giant American International Group paid employees of its troubled financial products unit \$165 million in bonuses even though the company had received more than \$170 billion in support from the federal government.

Under the new powers being sought by the administration, the treasury secretary could only seize a firm with the agreement of the president and the Federal Reserve.

Once in the equivalent of a conservatorship, the treasury secretary would have the power to limit payments to creditors and to break contracts governing executive compensation, a power

that was lacking in the AIG case.

The plan on toxic assets will use the resources of the \$700 billion bank bailout fund, the Federal Reserve and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

The initiative will seek to entice private investors, including big hedge funds, to participate by offering billions of dollars in low-interest loans to finance the purchases. The government will share the risks if the assets fall further in price.

When Geithner released the initial outlines of the administration's overhaul of the bank rescue program on Feb. 10, the markets took a nosedive. The Dow Jones industrial average plunged by 380 points as investors expressed disappointment about a lack of details.

Flores appointed G4S Cash Solutions GM

G4S Joseph Flores was recently appointed general manager of G4S Security Services' G4S Cash Solutions Guam and the CNMI, formerly Armored Express.

G4S acquired the contracts and assets of Armored Express in November 2008.

Flores has been employed with G4S for over 12 years having worked in all business lines. He brings with him a great deal of security and service experience which has recently been enhanced through extended training in G4S Hong Kong and Malaysia cash businesses.

Flores initial focus will be on business development and broadening the company's range of service offerings hand in hand with facility and vehicle upgrades.

"I believe that we have now created a structure and the leadership that will enable G4S Cash Solutions to develop its service offerings in line with our customers strategies and vision, Flores will be instrumental in driving technology and premise upgrades as well as fleet investment," said G4S Marianas general manager Phil Law.

G4S Cash Solutions is full service cash in transit company. G4S Security Services is a wholly owned subsidiary of Group4Securicor, the largest employer listed on the U.K. and Danish stock exchange with over 600,000 staff in 110 countries worldwide.

G4S Marianas locally employs over 800 staff and provides a range of security services, bank logistics and electronic solutions. (PR)

Drug industry advocates join chorus to split FDA

WASHINGTON (AP)—As momentum builds to rework the nation's food-safety system after a salmonella outbreak linked to peanuts, the drug industry is hoping for a happy side effect: faster approvals for new medicines.

Drug industry advocates are quietly allying with some of their longtime critics pushing to split the Food and Drug Administration into two agencies, one for food safety and one for medical products.

President Barack Obama bolstered hopes for a breakup last Saturday when he named two public health specialists to the agency's top positions and appointed an advisory group to reassess the nation's decades-old food safety laws.

Drug executives see a chance to

speed up drug approvals that have lagged amid a drought of new products, provided their regulator is no longer distracted by high-profile food-safety breakdowns.

"Every CEO that I know in health care is in favor of this, but none that value their share prices will go on the record for fear of retribution from the FDA," said Steve Brozak, president of WBB Securities, an investment brokerage focused on drug and biotech companies.

While FDA's food and drug staffs are separate, Brozak and others believe the public lashings over food outbreaks have made senior officials even more risk-averse on drug approvals. Even before the recent food safety problems,

FDA was under pressure from Congress for failing to catch problems with drugs like Merck's Vioxx, which was pulled from the market in 2004.

"The history of FDA is that the commissioner focuses on medical products and only turns to food safety when a crisis comes up," said Professor Michael Taylor, a former FDA and U.S. Department of Agriculture official now at George Washington University.

This year, the agency will spend just 73 cents on food safety for every dollar spent on drugs, according to the Institute of Medicine.

Recent outbreaks connected with spinach, lettuce, peppers and tainted milk from China have created a drumbeat for change.

Nation

FAA: Kids among 14 to 17 dead in MT plane crash

BUTTE, Mont. (AP)—A single engine turboprop airplane—possibly carrying children on a ski trip—nose-dived into a cemetery as it approached the Butte airport Sunday afternoon, killing 14 to 17 people aboard, a federal official said.

The aircraft crashed and burned at Holy Cross Cemetery, 500 feet short of Bert Mooney Airport, said Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Mike Fergus.

An investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board offered few details at a press conference in Butte Sunday night. No cause of the crash was given.

“We are just beginning our investigation,” said Kristi Dunks. “We don’t have a lot of information at this time.”

“Certain family members were contacted,” she said. “At this point, I don’t have an exact number.”

A California newspaper, the *Napa Valley Register*, reported on its Web site late Sunday that a family of five from St. Helena, Calif., including three preschoolers, was among the victims.

Dunks would not say if there had been a distress call from the pilot. It was partly cloudy, the visibility was 10 miles and winds were blowing from the northwest around 10 mph at the time of the crash, according to hourly temperature information from the National Weather Service.

The aircraft had departed from Oroville, Calif., and the pilot had filed a flight plan showing a destination of Bozeman, about



In this picture provided by Martha Guidoni via The Montana Standard, a fire burns inside the Holy Cross Cemetery after a small, single-engine plane crashed in an area just south of the Bert Mooney Airport in Butte, Mont. on Sunday, March 22, 2009.

85 miles southeast of Butte. But the pilot canceled his flight plan at some point and headed for Butte, Fergus said.

Preliminary reports indicate the dead include numerous children, he said.

“We think that it was probably a ski trip for the kids,” Fergus said.

Butte Silver-Bow Sheriff John Walsh said there were a few people at the cemetery at the time of the crash, but no one on the ground was injured. He would not describe witness reports.

Steve Guidoni of Butte said he was driving by the cemetery

and saw the plane nosedive into the ground. He stopped and ran over to see if he could help.

“It smelled like diesel fuel to me,” said Guidoni, 61. “There was nothing left of it. It just went straight into the ground. I went over there to try to help. I thought maybe I would pull someone out of the fire.”

Guidoni said he saw luggage and seat cushions lying around, but no bodies. He said the biggest piece of the plane was the size of a kitchen table.

“You wouldn’t even know a plane was there,” he said.

Nick Dipasquale, 19, was

working at a gas station across the street.

“I heard a loud bang,” he said. “It sounded like someone ran into the building.”

He said he ran outside to see flames as tall as the trees.

Dipasquale said people who were fueling their cars said they saw the plane flying low, begin a turn, start to wobble and then slam into the ground.

Fergus said the Pilatus PC-12 aircraft was manufactured in 2001.

The Pilatus PC-12 is a single-engine turboprop aircraft designed and manufactured by

Pilatus Aircraft of Switzerland. It is certified for 12 persons on board and typically seats 6-9 passengers plus 1-2 pilots. The PC-12 has a range of 1,750-2,600 miles and cruises at approximately 300 miles per hour, according to Flight Aware, a Web site that tracks air traffic.

The plane was registered to Eagle Cap Leasing Inc. in Enterprise, Ore., Fergus said. He didn’t know who was operating the plane.

I. Felkamp is listed in Oregon corporate records as Eagle Cap’s president. Attempts to reach him by phone were unsuccessful.

Family: Suspect in Oakland cop deaths feared jail

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Relatives of the man suspected of fatally shooting three Oakland police officers said Sunday the 26-year-old parolee was frustrated about not finding work and feared returning to jail.

The suspect Lovelle Mixon was slain in a gunfight with police during which two officers were killed Saturday, authorities said. Another officer was fatally shot earlier in the day and a fourth gravely wounded

after the two of them pulled Mixon over for a routine traffic stop, police said.

Mixon’s family gathered Sunday at his grandmother’s East Oakland home, where he had stayed on and off since being released from a nine-month sentence for a parole violation, family members said.

He had previously served six years in state prison for assault with a firearm during an armed robbery in San Francisco, the

family said. While he was in Corcoran state prison, he married his childhood girlfriend, they said.

Mixon’s uncle, 38-year-old Curtis Mixon of Fremont, said his nephew had become depressed because he could not find work as a convicted felon. His nephew expected authorities to issue an arrest warrant for missing parole meetings, even though the he felt he was not to blame, he said.

“I think his frustration was

building up, but he was trying to better himself,” Curtis Mixon said.

Mixon was wanted on a no-bail warrant for violating his parole when Sgt. Mark Dunakin, 40, and Officer John Hege, 41, both on motorcycles, stopped a 1995 Buick sedan in east Oakland just after 1 p.m., police said.

The driver opened fire, killing Dunakin and gravely wounding Hege, Oakland police spokesman Jeff Thomason said.

Police initially issued a statement Sunday saying Hege had died but later backtracked, saying the officer had been declared brain dead but remained on life support while a decision was made about donating his organs.

Reached by telephone, Dr. John S. Hege said his son was attached to a ventilator and “looks fine” except for a black eye behind which the bullet was lodged.

ND officials plead for volunteers as flood sets in

FARGO, N.D. (AP)—Officials in Fargo and Minnesota issued urgent pleas for volunteers to help with sandbagging as a storm on Sunday increased the threat of flood in an area already expected to be swamped by a record river crest.

“We need this help,” Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney said. “We need to stay calm, we need to stay cool, but we need to get serious and get this done.”

The National Weather Service said the Red River was about 3 feet above flood stage Sunday

in Fargo and more water was on the way. The river was expected to crest between 39 feet and 41 feet in the Fargo-Moorhead area by Friday, a day earlier and a foot higher than projected.

City officials originally planned to fill more than 1 million sandbags but now believe they need nearly 1.9 million bags to protect neighborhoods that would be affected by the new projections. About 400,000 to 500,000 bags must be filled each day to reach the goal by the end of the week, officials said.

Discovery’s pilots fired their ship’s thrusters to reorient the docked spacecraft to avoid a small piece from a 10-year-old Chinese rocket body that was due to pass uncomfortably close during Monday’s planned spacewalk.

Mission Control said keeping the spacecraft in this position for

about three hours—with Discovery’s belly facing forward—would result in a slow, natural drag of about a foot per second, enough to get the complex out of the way of a 4-inch piece of debris.

Space junk has been a recurring problem for the space station, especially recently. Earlier this month, the three space station residents had to take shelter in their emergency getaway capsule when another piece of orbital debris seemed like it might come too close.

And just last week, right be-

Space shuttle moves to avoid chunk of space junk

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—Confronted with orbiting junk again, NASA ordered the astronauts aboard the linked space station and shuttle Discovery to move out of the way of a piece of debris Sunday.

Discovery’s pilots fired their ship’s thrusters to reorient the docked spacecraft to avoid a small piece from a 10-year-old Chinese rocket body that was due to pass uncomfortably close during Monday’s planned spacewalk.

Mission Control said keeping the spacecraft in this position for

fore Discovery’s arrival, the space station almost had to dodge yet another piece of junk. The debris—from an old busted-up Soviet satellite—stayed at a safe distance.

“As far as I know, it’s coincidental that we’ve had just a couple in this close timeframe,” shuttle commander Lee Archambault said in a series of news interviews. The latest episode occurred as NASA scrambled to put together a spacewalking repair plan for a jammed equipment platform at the space station.

ACROSS THE NATION

NY cop saves sleeping family from burning house

EAST ROCKAWAY, N.Y. (AP)—Authorities on New York’s Long Island say an off-duty police officer saved a family when he noticed smoke coming from their home and woke them up. Nassau County authorities said the officer was on his way home Sunday morning when he saw the smoke at an East Rockaway home. They say he rang the bell and banged on the door until the residents woke. Two adults and three teenagers escaped without injury. The officer’s name wasn’t immediately disclosed. Police in California say one of their own also rescued a 66-year-old man from a house fire Sunday. Burbank police say Officer Kerry Schilf was on traffic control at the Pasadena Marathon when he heard about the fire a block away. Schilf ran to the house, kicked down a door and pulled the homeowner to safety.

Alert level raised for Alaska volcano

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—Increased earthquake activity has prompted scientists to raise the alert level for Alaska’s Mount Redoubt volcano. Geologists at the Alaska Volcano Observatory said Sunday that seismic activity had increased over the past two days. On Sunday morning, 40 to 50 earthquakes were being recorded every hour. Scientists said conditions may evolve rapidly and culminated in an eruption within days to weeks at the volcano roughly 100 miles southwest of Anchorage. A steam plume rising about 1,000 feet above the mountain peak was observed Saturday. The observatory had warned in late January that an eruption could occur at any time.

Michigan 15-year-old dies after police Taser him

BAY CITY, Mich. (AP)—Police in Michigan say a 15-year-old boy has died after being Tased by officers who were trying to break up a fight. Police didn’t release his name and say state police are investigating. A Bay City police news release says officers answered a report of an early morning fight on Sunday. The statement says two males were arguing in an apartment, and one of them “attempted to fight the officers.” Police say officers Tased him, and his reaction led them to immediately call for emergency medical help. He was pronounced dead at Bay Regional Medical Center. Deputy Chief Thomas Pletzke tells WNEM-TV police placed one officer on administrative leave.

Asia

Cargo plane crashes on landing at Tokyo airport

TOKYO (AP)—A FedEx cargo plane burst into flames after bouncing off a runway in unusually high winds at Tokyo's main international airport Monday, killing the pilot and copilot and closing a major runway for several hours.

The flight from Guangzhou, China, skipped along the main runway at Narita Airport before

skidding to a fiery halt, footage from airport security cameras showed. Firefighters and rescuers immediately swarmed the plane.

The pilot and copilot—the only people onboard the flight—were pulled from the cockpit and taken to a local hospital, where they were later confirmed dead.

A spokesman at the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Trans-

port and Tourism identified the pilot as Kevin Kyle Mosley and the co-pilot as Anthony Stephen Pino. He declined to give his name, citing department policy.

National broadcaster NHK said Mosley was 54 years old and Pino was 49.

Mosley lived in Hillsboro, Oregon, while Pino was from San Antonio, Texas, according

to online records at the Federal Aviation Administration.

Kyodo News said it was the first fatal aircraft accident at Narita Airport since it opened in 1978.

FedEx could not immediately confirm details of the crash, spokeswoman Denise Lauer said in an e-mail from the company's Memphis office. Police

could confirm only that the two crew members had died.

The plane smashed into the longer of Narita's two runways, which remained closed Monday morning with all incoming flights diverted, said airport spokeswoman Misuho Fukuda.

Ikuo Uda, a spokesman for Narita International Airport Corp., which manages the

airport, said 16 international flights were canceled, and that the airport was operating with only one runway several hours after the crash.

Parts of the wreckage were still burning hours after the crash. Kyodo said the aircraft was carrying a flammable liquid onboard, but had no other details.

Japanese military assumes more global role

CAMP MAKOMANAI, Japan (AP)—Col. Kenji Sawai, commander of Japan's 18th Infantry Regiment, stands in his headquarters dressed from head to foot in white camouflage. Skis clutter the hallways of his outpost in the snow-covered mountains of northern Japan, along with stacks of white ponchos, gloves and boots.

For decades, the mission for Japanese officers such as Sawai has been fairly straightforward: Defend the homeland. Narrowly defined, for Sawai and his infantrymen, that means protecting the island of Hokkaido, where the regiment is based, from invasion.

Now that definition is changing.

The political leadership and military planners—with the blessing of Washington, their closest ally—are cautiously moving the military away from its longtime role as a stay-at-home force. The new stance, while still centered on national defense, allows troops to be sent all over the world for a broad range of operations.



Japan Ground Self Defense Force troops take part in a ceremony to kick off the U.S./Japan military exercise at Makomanai camp in Sapporo, Japan, Monday, March 2, 2009.

Lawmakers are mulling calls from the United States for Tokyo to send “boots on the ground” to bolster President Barack Obama’s stepped-up efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan. The U.S. has said that it would welcome a dispatch of soldiers.

While such a move would set off controversy among the public and is unlikely anytime soon, the government has taken a number of steps that would have been unthinkable a decade ago. It sent 600 troops to Iraq, albeit in a noncombat role; it has

a refueling mission in the Indian Ocean that supports U.S. forces in Afghanistan; and it has sent two naval ships to the waters off Somalia to help battle pirates.

The tentative transition is reshaping the balance of power in northeast Asia—one of the

world’s most volatile and heavily armed regions—and could be a key to Japan’s security as China’s military rises and North Korea continues to be a nuclear-capable wild card.

Sawai’s remote command, a series of drab beige barracks

surrounded by sprawling marching fields, is already seeing the trickle-down effect.

At this year’s “North Wind” exercises, annual maneuvers held with the United States, U.S. commanders said training involved more joint attacks, more collaboration, closer command and control—just the kind of thing that would be needed if the Japanese were to be fighting alongside the U.S. in Iraq or Afghanistan.

“We have never actually been to war, and there are many things that we want to learn from the U.S. soldiers,” Sawai said after addressing his troops and several hundred U.S. National Guard soldiers who came to his base from Kentucky for the 11-day maneuvers.

It was a striking contrast: Many of the American guardsmen have been sent to war zones two or three times, while no Japanese soldier has fired a bullet in combat since Tokyo’s 1945 surrender ended World War II—thanks largely to a pacifist constitution written by U.S. occupiers to keep Japan from rearming.

China arrests Tibetan monks after attack on police

BEIJING (AP)—Police arrested six monks while 89 others turned themselves in after hundreds of Tibetans attacked a police station and government officials in northwestern China, state media reported.

All but two of the 95 being investigated Sunday were monks, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The six Tibetans were arrested for their involvement in a violent protest Saturday apparently triggered by the dis-

appearance of a Tibetan who escaped from police custody in Qinghai province, Xinhua said. It was not clear Monday if the 89 who surrendered were subsequently arrested.

A Tibetan exile said the protest involved as many as 2,000 people and was sparked by the apparent suicide of a monk under investigation for unfurling a Tibetan flag.

Xinhua said several hundred people—including nearly 100 monks from the Ragya Mon-

Sri Lankan military says 1,200 flee war zone

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Nearly 1,200 civilians have fled fierce fighting in northern Sri Lanka as government troops capture more territory from Tamil Tiger separatists, the military said Sunday.

About 1,055 of the civilians, including 380 children, reached military-held areas over the last 24 hours near Puthkkudiyirippu, where battles between government troops and the rebels have been raging for

weeks, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Puthkkudiyirippu is the last town held by the rebels, fighting since 1983 for a separate Tamil state in the island’s north and east.

Another 108 civilians fled the war zone by boat from the northeastern coast and reached safety further north on the Jaffna peninsula Saturday afternoon.

Troops are pushing into the last major block of Tiger-held

land from three angles, and a military statement said Sunday they had captured another small junction.

Independent accounts of the fighting are not possible because access to the war zone is restricted.

There has been a surge in civilians fleeing the area recently as the army pushes forward with an all-out offensive the government hopes will soon end the island’s 25-year-old civil war.

ASIAN BRIEFS

NATO: 10 insurgents killed in Afghanistan

KABUL (AP)—NATO troops killed 10 suspected militants, including a senior Taliban commander, in a strike on a compound in southern Afghanistan, while eight Afghan police officers and two NATO soldiers were killed in separate attacks in the same area, officials said Monday. Senior Taliban commander Maulawi Hassan and his associates were killed Saturday in a “precision operation” at an isolated compound in the Kajaki area of southern Helmand province, NATO said in a statement, adding there were no civilians involved. Southern Afghanistan is the center of the Taliban insurgency, which has made a comeback in the last three years following the group’s initial defeat by U.S.-led forces in late 2001. “Maulawi Hassan was a senior insurgent figure in northern Helmand, and his influence extended into western Uruzgan,” the statement said.

Japan says pirates fire on ship off Somalia

TOKYO (AP)—Pirates fired on a Japanese cargo ship off the coast of Somalia but escaped after the ship began evasive maneuvers, the Japanese government said Monday. Masami Suekado, a Transportation Ministry official, said no one was injured in the attack, which occurred Sunday in the pirate-infested Gulf of

Aden. Pirates in two small vessels approached the Jasmine Ace and fired several shots before escaping, Suekado said. Bullets broke windows and hit the ceiling of the bridge, he said. Noel Choong, who heads the International Maritime Bureau’s piracy reporting center in Kuala Lumpur, said pirates fired rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons to try and intercept the Japanese cargo ship.

India moves cricket tournament overseas for safety

MUMBAI, India (AP)—This year’s Indian Premier League cricket tournament will be held overseas because of security concerns since it coincides with the country’s general elections, organizers said Sunday. Some players and officials had expressed concerns about playing on the subcontinent after this month’s terrorist attack on Sri Lanka’s cricket team in Lahore, Pakistan. India was also the victim of a terror attack in Mumbai in November which left 164 people dead. Shashank Manohar, India’s cricket chief, said organizers were looking for a venue outside India after the government refused to approve the tournament schedule because security forces would be occupied with the elections. The 59-match tournament is to be held April 10 to May 24, while the elections for the lower house of India’s Parliament will take place across the country in five different phases between April 16 and May 13.

World



People gather for Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI at Cimangola grounds in Luanda, Angola, Sunday March 22, 2009.

WORLD BRIEFS

Hardline Saudi clerics urge TV ban on women, music

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—A group of Saudi clerics urged the kingdom's new information minister on Sunday to ban women from appearing on TV or in newspapers and magazines, making clear that the country's hardline religious establishment is skeptical of a new push toward moderation. In a statement, the 35 hardline clergymen also called on Abdel Aziz Khoja, who was appointed by King Abdullah on Feb. 14, to prohibit the playing of music and music shows on television. "We have great hope that this media reform will be accomplished by you," said the statement. "We have noticed how well-rooted perversity is in the Ministry of Information and Culture, in television, radio, press, culture clubs and the book fair." Although it raises the pressure on the new minister, the recommendation is likely to have little effect. Khoja's appointment was part of a government shake-up by Abdullah that removed a number of hardline figures and is believed to be part of an effort to weaken the influence of conservatives in this devout desert kingdom.

Netanyahu brings on 2nd coalition partner

JERUSALEM (AP)—The ultra-Orthodox Jewish Shas Party says it has reached a coalition deal with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, bringing him closer to forming his government. Shas initiated an agreement with Netanyahu's Likud Party early Monday. Last week, Netanyahu initiated a deal with the ultranationalist Yisrael Beiteinu. So far he has reached agreements with parties that hold 53 of parliament's 120 seats. Netanyahu is also trying to bring in other religious parties and the dovish, 13-seat Labor, headed by Defense Minister Ehud Barak. Labor is to vote on Tuesday whether to join the government. Netanyahu has also tried to bring in Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni's Kadima Party. However, she has declined because he hasn't stated a commitment to negotiating the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Pope decries African wars at Mass for 1 million

LUANDA, Angola (AP)—Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass for the largest gathering of his African pilgrimage Sunday, telling a crowd on the outskirts of this seaside capital that reconciliation on the war-ravaged continent would come only with a "change of heart, a new way of thinking."

The Vatican said as many as 1 million people turned out on the dusty field near a cement factory to hear the pope at the last major event of his seven-day trip, which began Tuesday in Cameroon.

Speaking from a tented pink altar, the pope said evils in Africa had "reduced

the poor to slavery and deprived future generations of the resources needed to create a more solid and just society."

"How true it is that war can destroy everything of value," said Benedict, wearing a pink cape and mopping his sweaty brow with a white handkerchief kept inside his sleeve.

Later he was scheduled to meet with representatives of women's rights groups to praise the role of women in African society.

Angolans have been enslaved, subjugated and at war almost nonstop since Portuguese colonizers brought the first

Catholic missionaries in 1491. Many of the slaves taken to Brazil, for example, came from Angola.

The Catholic Church was an ally of the colonizers who discriminated against the people until independence from Portugal in 1975, when civil war erupted, in part fueled by the country's oil and diamond wealth.

Some 15,000 died, including missionaries, before the war ended in 2002, and the scars still are evident among the many people who lost limbs in one of the most heavily mined countries in the world.

A Marxist revolution also has left scars, though the country's president for 30 years, Eduardo dos Santos, abandoned communism and improved relations with the church starting in the late 1980s.

Critics say last year's massive election victory was marred by fraud and corruption and that the pope must beware of allowing his visit, sponsored by the state, to be seen as legitimizing an authoritarian regime. The bishops in Angola twice have denounced the government for leaving its people mired in poverty while leaders enrich themselves off oil and diamonds.

Aruba: New search for teen who disappeared in 2005

Venezuela's Chavez calls Obama 'ignorant'

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Sunday called President Barack Obama "ignorant," saying he has a lot to learn about Latin America.

The socialist leader said he had been ready to name a new ambassador in Washington when Obama took office, but put that on hold after the new U.S. president accused him of "exporting terrorism" and being an obstacle to progress in the region.

"At least one could say, 'poor ignorant person,'" Chavez said on his weekly television and radio program, adding that Obama "should read a little bit so that he learns about ... the reality of Latin America."

U.S. National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer declined to comment on Chavez's statements.

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—The father of a U.S. teen who went missing nearly four years ago in Aruba said Sunday that a private investigator will scour a retention pond for answers that have eluded the family throughout numerous false leads and fruitless searches.

Dave Holloway said tracker dog specialist Fred Golba, from Chicopee, Massachusetts, will begin his latest search for evidence into Natalee Holloway's May 2005 disappearance early Monday. He said the tracker, who has searched for her eight times before, must be accompanied to the pond by Aruban

police escorts, who delayed an anticipated weekend search.

Natalee Holloway, from Mountain Brook, Alabama, was 18 when she was last seen leaving a bar in the Aruban capital on the final night of a high school graduation trip. No trace of her has been found despite extensive searches involving hundreds of volunteers, Aruban soldiers, FBI agents and even Dutch F-16 jets with special equipment.

But Dave Holloway said a witness last year alleged that he saw the only remaining suspect, Joran van der Sloot, coming out of the brackish pond in northwest Aruba with only one sneaker on after Na-

talee's disappearance. He said the witness has passed a polygraph test.

"I've been looking for (nearly) four years and I intend to search all the evidence and every lead," said Holloway, speaking to The Associated Press from his home in Meridian, Mississippi. "(The witness) saw what he saw—or he believed he saw what he saw."

Sections of the remote pond area have been searched previously and no evidence was ever found.

Holloway said he had been waiting for the retention pond to dry up before commissioning this latest search, "but the weather has not been cooperative."

Iraqi PM says shoe-thrower had fair trial

SYDNEY (AP)—Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki says his government did not intervene in the trial of the journalist who hurled his shoes at former President George W. Bush, but offered little sympathy for the man many consider a hero for his protest.

In an interview broadcast Sunday,

al-Maliki disagreed that many Iraqis supported Muntadhar al-Zeidi's act of shoe-throwing during a news conference last December by the two leaders in Baghdad.

Al-Zeidi was sentenced earlier this month in an Iraqi court to three years in prison after a quick trial—two relative-

ly brief hearings—that fed widespread suspicion among Iraqis that al-Maliki's U.S.-backed government orchestrated the process. Defense lawyers said they had no evidence of interference, although they argued the sentence wasn't warranted because al-Zeidi's act was an expression of freedom and not a crime.

New video shows Briton kidnapped in Iraq in 2007

BAGHDAD (AP)—The British Embassy said Sunday it had received a new video showing one of five Britons taken hostage nearly two years ago allegedly by Shiite extremists that the U.S. believes are backed by Iran. Also Sunday, CNN reported that Turkey's prime minister said he would be receptive to allowing U.S. troops to leave Iraq through Turkish territory if President Barack Obama's administration asks permission. British Embassy spokesman Sean McColm refused to identify the hostage or say how and when the video was received. He said the video was "clearly a significant development" and that the British government was working for the safe release of all the captives. The five Britons—information technology consultant Peter Moore and four of his security guards—were seized by heavily armed men in police uniforms in May 2007 from the Finance Ministry compound in central Baghdad.

Overdrive

2009 LAND ROVER RANGE ROVER SPORT HSE

Smart, enduring value

WHEELS RANGEROVER: The 2009 Range Rover Sport HSE reworks the traditional concept of luxury. This SUV deemphasizes extravagance for the sake of status in favor of the idea that luxury reflects superior functionality and enduring value.

THE WASHINGTON POST



BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The traditional concept of luxury is being reworked under Land Rover's new owner, Tata Motors Limited, India's biggest manufacturer of trucks and passenger cars.

Tata is deemphasizing the notion of luxury as extravagance for the sake of status in favor of the idea that luxury reflects superior functionality and enduring value.

It is a change in emphasis mandated by the dismal economic conditions in the United States and Western Europe as well as by Tata's long-range plans to increase sales of Land Rover vehicles in emerging markets such as China, South America, Africa and India.

In the mature and troubled U.S. market, people nowadays aren't coming into showrooms in search of motorized baubles, cars and trucks that provide little more than illusions of prestige, said Finbar McFall, vice president of marketing for Land Rover North America.

Consumers still capable of affording something such as this week's test vehicle, the 2009 Land Rover Range

Rover Sport HSE, want to be assured that they're getting more, McFall said.

Land Rover's current marketing aim, thus, "is to inspire confidence and remind consumers why a Land Rover isn't just a desirable choice but also an intelligent choice—a safe, smart and sensible choice."

In his corporate statement, McFall noticeably avoided describing the gasoline-powered Land Rover models sold in this country as fuel-efficient choices. It is an understandable omission.

The 2009 Range Rover Sport HSE gets a deplorable 12 miles per gallon in the city and 18 miles per gallon on the highway—a combined 15 miles per gallon—requiring premium unleaded gasoline.

Even at today's prices—a national average of \$2.18 a gallon, according to the Energy Information Administration (EIA)—the current U.S. version of the mid-size Range Rover Sport HSE consumes enough fuel to drive a middle- to upper-income owner to the poor house.

If Tata really wants to make a good impression with this model, it should ship over a more fuel-efficient diesel version. Current diesel prices in the United States

are roughly equivalent to what is being charged for premium gas, according to the EIA. But diesel power in internal combustion engines is 30 to 35 percent more fuel-efficient than gasoline. Lots of middle- to upper-income buyers would be willing to live with that.

Such a rapprochement is made more likely by how easy, enjoyable and useful it is to live with most of what is the Range Rover Sport HSE.

This is a four-wheel-drive sport-utility vehicle that seems to defy gravity. It weighs a hefty 5,468 pounds, which is no small factor in its egregious fuel consumption. Yet, it is an especially nimble driver—a utility vehicle, also known as a "truck," that lives up to the "sports" part of its name.

Off-road performance in the Range Rover HSE inspires a kind of fearlessness. (Just check your fuel gauge before you set out.)

If I had to choose a utility vehicle for beach driving, the Range Rover Sport HSE, or the Land Rover LR3 from which it is derived, easily would be among my first choices (assuming, of course, that the beach allows off-road driving).

Both the Range Rover Sport HSE and

LR3 have onboard, automatic terrain-setting systems. Turn a dial. Choose a setting for pavement, rocky terrain, sand or gravel. The vehicle makes numerous appropriate adjustments (suspension setting, braking, handling, acceleration control) in response. You are set to go with confidence.

On-road travel is fast, wonderfully stable and comfortable. But again, remember that the more enthusiasm with which you push that accelerator pedal, the more gasoline your vehicle will consume.

The Range Rover Sport HSE comes with a 300-horsepower V-8 engine capable of producing 315 foot-pounds of torque. It can move and apparently can continue moving for many years. That partly is where both its practicality and value come in. R.L. Polk vehicle registration data show that 75 percent of all Land Rover vehicles sold in this country since Land Rover's 1989 introduction in the United States remain on the road.

That longevity might be a testament to the fact that most Americans who buy Land Rover vehicles use them to tour the parking lots and garages of strip-mall shopping complexes. Still, that's an impressive number.

NUTS & BOLTS

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

COMPLAINT

A combined 15 miles per gallon using premium gasoline—even for affluent buyers—just doesn't cut it in an economically troubled market, nor will it do much for sales in a recovered economy. Here's urging Tata to put more fuel-efficient drive systems in America. The company can start with diesels.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING

All are among best-in-class for mid-size utility vehicles. Assuming you can cope with the fuel costs, this is a joy to take on the road—and off.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT

Sport-utility vehicles get no respect on the street nowadays. But the Range Rover Sport HSE at least gets a grudging nod. People seem to know that it will be around long after the fad of hating SUVs has passed.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT

This is a premium, mid-size sport-utility vehicle with full-time four-wheel drive (mechanical center differential, center locking differential, electronic high and low gear selection with hill ascent/descent assistance). The V-8 engine is mounted up front; the spare tire is mounted underneath an aluminum body.

CAPACITIES

There are seats for five people. Maximum cargo capacity is 71 cubic feet. The Range Rover Sport HSE can carry a payload, or onboard weight, of 1,301 pounds. It can be equipped to tow a trailer weighing 7,716 pounds.

MILEAGE

A combined 15 miles per gallon for city-highway travel.

SAFETY

Standard equipment includes front and rear ventilated disc brakes with antilock protection; emergency braking assistance; electronic stability and traction control; side and rear air bags; and xenon high-intensity discharge headlamps.

PRICE

The base price is \$58,375. Dealer's price is \$53,121. Price as tested is \$61,550, including \$2,400 in options (\$2,000 for Brembo brakes and sports-handling upgrade suspension; \$400 for satellite radio) and a \$775 transportation charge. Dealer's price as tested is \$56,080. Prices sourced from Land Rover, Edmunds.com and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

PURSE-STRINGS NOTE

Compare with Acura MDX, Audi Q5 and Q7, BMW X5, Cadillac SRX, Infiniti FX35, Lexus RX 350, Lincoln MKX and Mercedes-Benz GLK.

Jaguar, Buick dethrone Lexus in reliability study

By DAN STRUMPF
AP AUTO WRITER



NEW YORK (AP)—British luxury carmaker Jaguar surged to the top of J.D. Power and Associates' closely watched vehicle dependability study this year, tying Buick for the No. 1 spot and dethroning Lexus for the first time since the Japanese luxury brand has been a part of the survey.

Lexus, Toyota Motor Corp.'s luxury brand, took second place in the study released Thursday, followed by Toyota's namesake brand, then Mercury, Infiniti and Acura.

"Buick and Jaguar both lead the industry in nameplate performance," said Neal Oddes, director of product research and analysis at J.D. Power. "In terms of individual model performance, Lexus and Toyota still do very, very well."

The annual study measures problems experienced by the original owners of vehicles after three years. Suzuki own-

"We see improvements all over the board with Jaguar," Oddes said, citing fewer reported problems with vehicle exterior, sound system and the overall driving experience. "The improvement at a nameplate level is significant."

Still, Jaguar, which Indian car giant Tata Motors Ltd. bought from Ford in 2007, remains a relatively small-volume brand in the U.S. It sold just 14,000 vehicles here in 2008, while Buick sold 128,000.

Oddes said this year's study was redesigned to exclude routine fixes from a vehicle's list of problems. For example, the study no longer counts tire or windshield wiper replacements as a reportable problem. The intended result is a study that focuses on actual glitches with a vehicle, Oddes said, though it also makes it difficult to make year-over-year comparisons. "We cleaned up the survey to really try to focus in on things that are truly broken," he said.

The industry average was 170 prob-

lems per 100 vehicles, or somewhat less than two problems per vehicle. Last year, the industry average was 206 problems per 100 vehicles, but year-over-year improvements this year are much less pronounced when accounting for the changes in the study's methodology, Oddes said.

The most frequently reported problem was wind noise, followed by brake noise, peeling paint, brake vibrations and problems with a vehicle's lights, Oddes said. The problems have been fairly consistent from year to year, he said.

J.D. Power's dependability study surveyed 46,313 original owners of 2006 model-year vehicles in October 2008. The results are watched closely by automakers and are often used in advertising. Owners' opinion of a car after three years can be a major influence on their opinion about that brand again.

The firm also releases an initial quality study, which measures problems in the first 90 days of ownership.

Life & Style

'Hillary: The Movie,' now showing at Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (AP)—Months after its debut, "Hillary: The Movie" faces nine of the nation's toughest critics: the Supreme Court.

The justices' review of the slashing documentary financed by longtime critics of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton could bring more than just a thumbs up or thumbs down. It may settle the question of whether the government can regulate a politically charged film as a campaign ad.

David Bossie, a former Republican congressional aide who produced the Clinton movie and another describing then-Sen. Barack Obama as an overhyped media darling, said his films are about important moments in American politics.

"The outcome of this case will dictate how we're able to make films and educate people about them," he said.

At issue in the case being argued before justices Tuesday is the 90-minute anti-Clinton movie and television ads Bossie wanted to air during the 2008 primaries advertising the film.

Bossie's group, the conservative Citizens United, released the movie as Clinton, then a



AP
David Bossie, leader of Citizens United and producer of "Hillary: The Movie", is seen in his office in Washington, Friday, March 20, 2009.

New York senator, was competing with Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The movie is unquestionably anti-Clinton, featuring commentary from conservative pundits, some of whom specifically say Clinton was not fit to be commander in chief.

One scene, which was used in an ad, has Dick Morris, a former adviser to President Bill Clinton who is now a critic of the Clintons, saying the senator is "the closest thing we have in America to a European socialist."

The movie was shown in eight theaters. Bossie's group wanted to run ads on television in key election states during peak primary season and show the movie on cable television's video-on-demand.

Federal courts said the ads would violate the McCain-Feingold law, the popular name for 2002 revisions to the nation's campaign finance laws. Judges called "Hillary: The Movie" a 90-minute attack ad, rulings that would require Citizens United

to identify the financial backers for the ads if they were to appear on television.

The court also said that if Bossie's group showed the movie on cable television, financial backers would have to be named and the group would have to pay the cost of airing the movie.

Citizens United appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that "Hillary: The Movie" should not be considered a political ad. The group says there is nothing in the movie urging people to vote against Clinton. The group says the film is more of a documentary comparable to critical television news programs such as "Frontline," "Nova" and "60 Minutes."

"The fact that 'Hillary' presents a critical assessment of Sen. Clinton's political background, character, and fitness for office does not convert the movie ... into an appeal to vote against Sen. Clinton," said Theodore Olson, Citizens United's lawyer.

"Indeed, a critical exposition of the political background and policy views of a former first lady and sitting U.S. senator is precisely the type of uninhibited, robust, and wide open debate and discussion that the First Amendment protects and encourages," Olson argues.

A panel of federal judges disagreed, calling "Hillary" nothing but an extended-length political attack ad. The Justice Department agreed, saying "'Hillary' is a 90-minute advocacy piece whose unmistakable meaning is that Hillary Clinton should not be elected president.

Some question whether that declaration strays too close to regulation of journalists, who generally have been exempt from campaign finance rules.

Without passing judgment on the content of "Hillary," the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press filed a brief supporting Citizens United, telling the Supreme Court that the media has been critical of presidential candidates since George Washington.

George W. Bush to write memoir about 'decisions'

NEW YORK (AP)—Former President George W. Bush, who once famously called himself "The Decider," is writing a book about decisions.

"I want people to understand the environment in which I was making decisions. I want people to get a sense of how decisions were made and I want people to understand the options that were placed before me," Bush said during a brief telephone interview Wednesday with The Associated Press from his office in Dallas.

Bush's book, tentatively (not decisively) called "Decision Points," is scheduled for a 2010 release by Crown, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group. It is unusual in a couple of ways.

Instead of telling his life story, Bush will concentrate on about a dozen personal and presidential choices, from giving up drinking to picking Dick

Cheney as his vice president to sending troops to Iraq. He will also write about his relationship with family members, including his father, the first President Bush, his religious faith and his highly criticized response to Hurricane Katrina.

Instead of having competing publishers bid, Bush and his representative, Washington attorney Robert Barnett, negotiated for world rights only with Crown Publishers, where authors include President Obama and Bush's secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice. Barnett used a similar strategy in working out deals with publisher Alfred A. Knopf for another client, former President Clinton.

"Proceeding in this way gets the project going promptly, avoids the time-consuming process of multiple meetings and multiple negotiations, and preserves confidentiality for all

concerned," Barnett said.

Financial details were not disclosed, although publishers have openly doubted that Bush would receive the \$15 million Clinton got for his memoir, "My Life."

Crown Publishing is a division of Random House Inc. and the deal was handled by Random House executive vice president and publisher at large Stephen Rubin. As head of the Doubleday Publishing Group—a division recently dismantled in a corporate realignment—Rubin released Dan Brown's mega-selling "The Da Vinci Code" and Kitty Kelley's "The Family," an unauthorized and unflattering take on the Bush dynasty.

Barnett said that Rubin and Crown had shown "great enthusiasm" and that a deal was made not long after Rubin and Crown officials met with Bush in Dallas.



In this photo released by TinePublic, former U.S. President George W. Bush, left, speaks with former Canadian Ambassador to the United States Frank McKenna at an invitation-only event titled a "Conversation with George W. Bush" on Tuesday March 17, 2009 in Calgary, Canada.

God Bless You All!

Thank you, Gilosou, Si Yu'us Ma'ase
and Maraming Salamat Po.

Natasha Richardson buried near upstate NY home



The casket of Natasha Richardson led by husband Liam Neeson, left, is brought into St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Lithgow, N.Y. on Sunday, March 22, 2009.

Reality TV star Jade Goody dies after cancer fight

LONDON (AP)—Jade Goody's family asks for "privacy at last" after the death at 27 of the brash former dental assistant who turned her tumultuous life and struggle with cervical cancer into a one-woman reality show.

Mocked as a slob, then celebrated as an eyewoman, Goody lived one of the world's most public lives, with cameras capturing everything from her racial slurs to her cancer diagnosis and chemotherapy.

Goody gained fame in 2002 at age 21 when she joined the British version of the reality television show "Big Brother," in which contestants live together for weeks and are constantly filmed. She became a highly divisive star and something of a national touchstone who sparked debate about race, class and celebrity.

During filming of an Indian version of "Celebrity Big Brother" in the summer of 2008, Goody received a diagnosis of cervical cancer by telephone from a doctor in Britain. The camera captured the deeply personal moment, which was shown repeatedly on TV.

The progress of her illness was chronicled in detail in the tabloid press and weekly magazines. She underwent surgery and chemotherapy in the public eye—filming part of the experience.

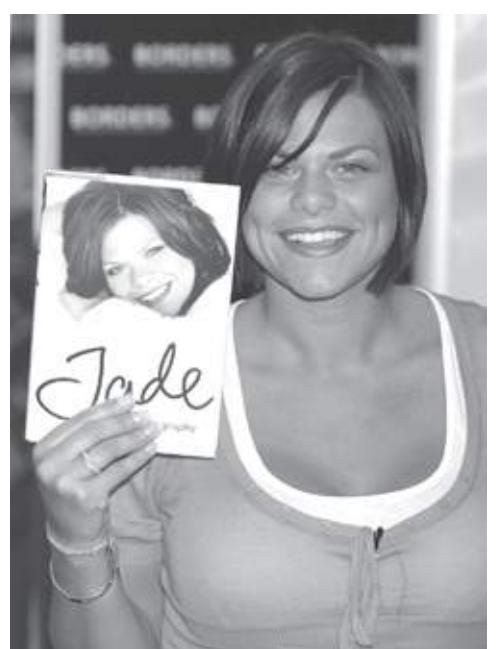
The Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, who heads the Church of England, said Goody showed a brave side in the face of death.

"If in her earlier career it was all about her, then I think at the end it was about something else," Williams said.

Bald and frail, Goody married fiancee Jack Tweed last month in an elaborate event staged at an elegant countryside hotel outside London. The wedding was shown on television and the photos were sold, prompting criticism.

But Goody, who grew up in a poor London neighborhood, defended herself—saying she wanted her two young sons to have a better life than she had. Goody's father was a heroin addict who served jail time for robbery and died in 2005; her mother was a former crack addict who lost the use of an arm in a motorcycle accident.

"People will say I'm doing this for money," she said. "And they're right, I am. But not to buy



A May 3, 2006 file photo Jade Goody with her autobiography, in a London bookstore.

Shilpa Shetty, while filming the British version of "Celebrity Big Brother" in 2007. Goody bad-mouthed Shetty's cooking of Indian food, mocked her accent and referred to her as "Shilpa Poppadom." While complaints against the show skyrocketed, so did ratings.

Goody's treatment of Shetty sparked anger in India and Britain—even becoming the topic of debate during a House of Commons question-and-answer session with then Prime Minister Tony Blair. A major sponsor suspended its advertising deal with "Celebrity Big Brother," and a chain of perfume shops pulled a Goody-endorsed fragrance, ironically named "Shh..."

After television viewers voted to evict Goody from the show, Goody—herself of mixed race—insisted she wasn't a racist. "I argue like that with everybody. It wasn't just because of the color of her skin that I was that aggressive," she said during an interview on Britain's GMTV.

LITHGOW, N.Y. (AP)—A somber group of friends and family gathered in a small Hudson Valley town Sunday to say a final farewell to Tony Award-winning actress Natasha Richardson.

Liam Neeson, in a dark suit and sunglasses, was at the head of the casket as he and five other pallbearers carried his wife's coffin into St. Peter's Episcopal Church, near the home where the two married in 1994.

He and Richardson's mother, actress Vanessa Redgrave, waved to the dozens of reporters crowded behind a police barricade on the dirt road leading to the tiny white clapboard church. The grieving family—including the couple's two sons, Micheal, 13, and Daniel, 12—then paused to allow the media to photograph them in front of church before the service.

Ralph Fiennes, Alan Rick-

man, Laura Linney, Uma Thurman and Timothy Dalton were among the friends who filed into the church on the chilly spring afternoon.

After a graveside service under a large green tent, the 45-year-old actress was buried in a nearby cemetery, amid hilly horse farms about 80 miles north of New York City.

She was laid to rest near the grave of her maternal grandmother, the actress Rachel Kempson, who died while visiting her granddaughter and Neeson at their home in nearby Millbrook in 2003. Neeson and the Redgrave family, including Richardson's sister, actress Joely Richardson, visited Kempson's grave after the burial.

Richardson died Wednesday at a Manhattan hospital after falling while skiing Monday at the Mont Tremblant resort in the

Canadian province of Quebec. The New York City medical examiner's office said Richardson suffered from an epidural hematoma, which causes bleeding between the skull and the brain's covering. She wasn't wearing a helmet when she fell.

Richardson is descended from one of Britain's great acting dynasties but built her own reputation in films such as "Patty Hearst" and "The Handmaid's Tale," as well as for her work on the stage. She won a Tony for her role in the 1998 revival of "Cabaret."

She costarred with future husband Neeson in the 1993 revival of Eugene O'Neill's "Anna Christie." The two married at their secluded Millbrook home the next year.

The famous couple was well known in this area, which counts many celebrities among its part-time residents.

Death and Funeral Announcement Romeo C. Pagapular

was born to life on January 23, 1939
and was called to his eternal rest
on March 19, 2009

Wife: Cecilia G. Pagapular

Children:

Rocel "Bong" Pagapular & Loida
Pagapular (*Ronald Sean and Robby*)
Catherine Pagapular & Rick Henderson
(*Spencer and Zivon*)
Kristie Marie Pagapular & Romeo
Barcelon (*Kaetia Celeen, Kristopher, Dominic*)
Randy Pagapular
Charlene P. Valle & Amadel Valle
Kathy Lalaine Pagapular & Brad Ruszala



And Survived by:

Lovelle Lea D'lonsod (niece)
Gregory Ganzan (Brother-in-law)
Jean D'lonsod (Sister-in-law)

Parents: †Vicente Pagapular & Julieta
Pagapular

Brothers & Sisters:

Nicandro & Pundadura Pagapular
Leliosa P. Bajao
Cynthia & Jovito Espiritu
†Pepito & Leticia Pagapular
Janita & Martin Badiang
Nonette & Rolly Pascual

Parents-in-law: †Sinecio Ganzan & †Mercedes Ganzan

Nightly Rosary is being said at 7:00 p.m. at Kristo Rai Church.

On Wednesday, March 25, 2009, his remains will be escorted at 7:30 a.m. from Nuestra Señora Dela Paz Memorial Chapel, Cabrera Center to Mt. Carmel Cathedral for final viewing and last respects. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. Interment Service will follow at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Please join us in prayers.

The Family

'Knowing' tops at box office with \$24.8 million



In this film publicity image released by Summit Entertainment, Nicolas Cage, right, and Rose Byrne are shown in a scene from "Knowing."

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Audiences knew what they wanted this weekend: Nicolas Cage and the apocalypse.

Summit Entertainment's supernatural thriller "Knowing," which stars Cage as an astrophysics professor who figures out how to predict monumental catastrophes, debuted as the No. 1 movie at the weekend box office with \$24.8 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Knowing" easily foiled "I Love You, Man" and "Duplicity," the other films opening in wide release. "I Love You, Man" was second with \$18 million and "Duplicity" was third at \$14.4 million.

The victory was another affirmation for Summit Entertainment, the small studio behind the vampire saga "Twilight," which opened last year with more than \$69 million and went on sale Saturday on DVD after fans lined up at midnight.

Richie Fay, the studio's president of domestic distribution, said there are several reasons for the studio's successes.

"We've got great creative talent at the studio, veterans on the marketing side and I've got a few years under my belt on the distribution side," said Fay. "It's the right people coming together at the right time. We're lean and mean, but we pack a punch. We can deliver on all levels. With the DVD coming out so well, we're obviously a fully func-

1. "Knowing," \$24.8 million.
2. "I Love You, Man," \$18 million.
3. "Duplicity," \$14.4 million.
4. "Race To Witch Mountain," \$13 million.
5. "Watchmen," \$6.7 million.
6. "The Last House on the Left," \$5.9 million.
7. "Taken," \$4.1 million.
8. "Slumdog Millionaire," \$2.7 million.
9. "Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail," \$2.5 million.
10. "Coraline," \$2.1 million.

tioning studio."

The "bromantic" comedy "I Love You, Man" attracted equal numbers of men and women, according to the studio. It stars Paul Rudd and Jason Segel.

"I think the movie debuted at expectations," said Don Harris, Paramount's vice president of distribution. "We had the advantage of opening at the beginning of college and high school spring break, so the audience for this film is going to continue to be available. We think the movie will have good legs. There are no other comedies coming out for the next couple of weekends, so that bodes well for the film."

The weekend's other major debut, Universal's romantic comedy "Duplicity," was written and directed by "Michael Clayton" director Tony Gilroy and stars Julia Roberts and Clive

Owen as romantically entangled former spies who scheme to steal millions of dollars from their rival pharmaceutical companies.

"I liken 'Duplicity' to cinematic fine dining," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box office tracker Media By Numbers. "I think 'Knowing' and 'I Love You, Man' were more like fast food. They were fun and easy. 'Duplicity' was just a little bit more of a challenging film for audiences. I think audiences were looking for a different kind of escapism."

Factoring in 2009's higher admission prices, the box office total was down 5 percent compared with last year, the second straight weekend of decline.

Dergarabedian doesn't believe the decline indicates the end of an otherwise stellar year at the box office, however, saying next weekend's debut of Dreamworks' "Monsters vs. Aliens" should be strong.

"Being only 12 weeks into the year, every weekend makes a huge difference," said Dergarabedian. "We're still doing great this year, but it just shows you that the business is extremely cyclical. I'm not ready to signal any kind of doom and gloom just yet. We have 'Monsters vs. Aliens' opening Friday, and I think that will get us back on track."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

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NOW SHOWING

Now Showing:

- Knowing**
- Synopsis**
In 1958, as part of the dedication ceremony for a new elementary school, a group of students is asked to draw pictures to be stored in a time capsule. But one mysterious girl fills her sheet of paper with rows of apparently random numbers instead. Fifty years later, a new generation of students examines the capsule's contents and the girl's cryptic message ends up in the hands of young Caleb Koestler.

When I Met You

Synopsis
Jenny, a small promodizer, hitches a ride on a seaplane with struggling pilot, Benjie, to attend a wedding in Palawan... Jenny's boyfriend Albert and Benjie's fiancée, Tracy, are both friends with the bride and the two thought it would be great for their respective partners, Jenny and Benjie, to join them in Palawan. On the way to the wedding, Benjie and Jenny find themselves no getting along.

Race To Witch Mountain

Synopsis
For years, stories have circulated about a secret place in the middle of the Nevada desert, known for unexplained phenomena and strange sightings. It is called Witch Mountain, and when a Las Vegas cab driver finds two teens with supernatural powers in his cab, he suddenly finds himself in the middle of an adventure he can't explain.

The Last House On The Left

Synopsis
Friday 4:30 7:15 9:55
Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
Mon and Tues 4:30 7:15
Garret Dillahunt, Rhys Coiro
Horror • Rated R

Watchmen

Synopsis
Friday 4:00 7:05 10:15
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:05 10:15
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:05
Mon and Tues 4:00 7:05
Malin Akerman, Billy Crudup
Action, Adventure • Rated R

Slumdog Millionaire

Synopsis
Friday 4:20 7:00 9:45
Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:00 9:45
Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:00
Mon and Tues 4:20 7:00
Dev Patel, Anil Kapoor
Comedy, Drama • Rated R

The Uninvited

Synopsis
Friday 4:05 7:25 9:35
Saturday 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:35
Sunday 1:20 4:05 7:25
Mon and Tues 4:05 7:25
Elizabeth Banks, David Strathairn
Horror, Remake • Rated PG 13

NO PASSES ■ NO PASSES OR SUPER SAVERS
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www.gohollywood.com

A home in Southington, Conn. that was formerly the site of a funeral home and allegedly haunted in 1986 is seen Wednesday, March 18, 2009.

Horror film draws unwanted visitors to Conn. house

SOUTHBURY, Conn. (AP)—A Hollywood horror film that depicts the alleged haunting of a former funeral parlor in central Connecticut is turning into a nightmare for the home's current owners and their neighbors.

The movie, "A Haunting in Connecticut," doesn't open until Friday, but curious fans are already making a beeline for the Southington home that

inspired the movie.

"It's just been really, really stressful," said Susan Trotta-Smith, who bought the home 10 years ago with her husband. "It's been a total change from a very quiet house in a very quiet neighborhood to looking out the window and seeing cars stopping all the time. It's been very, very stressful, and sometimes worrisome."

The family has never seen

anything unusual inside their five-bedroom, two-family white wood-frame house and does not believe the property was haunted.

"It's got beautiful woodwork, and there is a nice warm feeling to the house," Trotta-Smith said. "Because it was a funeral home, the upstairs apartment is much more spacious. It's like two full houses, and it has a

See HORROR on next page

Actor Bruce Willis weds for the 2nd time

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Bruce Willis has tied the knot for the second time.

The actor's publicity agency, Rogers & Cowan, says in a statement Sunday that the 54-year-old Willis married Emma Heming in a small, private ceremony at his home in Parrot Cay in the Turks & Caicos Islands.

The couple met through mutual friends more than a year ago.

This is the first marriage for Heming, a 30-year-old model/actress.

Guests included Willis' three daughters from his first marriage to actress Demi Moore: Rumor, 20, Scout, 17, and Tallulah Belle, 14, as well as Moore, and her husband, actor Ashton Kutcher.

The couple plan a civil ceremony when they return to California.

In this Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2008 picture, Bruce Willis, left, and Emma Heming arrive at the premiere of "The House Bunny" in Los Angeles.

AP



South By Kanye West? Rapper plays final SXSW night

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—For a night, it was South By Kanye West.

The rapper performed twice Saturday at the annual South By Southwest music conference and festival, dominating the final night of the live music event mostly populated by lesser known acts.

In an expected but not officially announced show earlier in the evening, West performed beneath a tent as part of a party sponsored by Fader Magazine and Levi's. He put on a lengthy show, mostly alternating songs with lesser known rappers from his G.O.O.D. Music re-

cord label (it stands for "Getting Out Our Dreams").

"It feels so good to rock for you tonight," said West, who also streamed the concert online.

West was clearly out to promote his label's talent, including rappers Consequence and Kid Cudi, who performed his hit "Day 'N' Nite." But the concert culminated with cameos from West's fellow Chicago rapper Common and the R&B singer Erykah Badu, both of whom were cheered wildly by the thousands in attendance.

West, who noted that Fader was the first magazine to put him on the cover, may have been

feeling nostalgic. He played a number of "old school joints" from his first album, 2004's "College Dropout."

A few hours later, West also made an unexpected appearance at Perez Hilton's party, held a few blocks north in downtown Austin in a converted grocery store. Hosted by the celebrity gossip blogger, the party has become one of the bigger private events at SXSW.

West performed a handful of songs (this time without guests) and said he respected Hilton (whose real name is Mario Lavandeira) for being "real" even when he has made fun of the rapper.

For his part, Hilton was redeemed after another performer, the British rapper Lady Sovereign, canceled on him. An angry Hilton—who said Lady Sovereign was a late scratch due to sickness—repeatedly used a vulgarity to refer to her, bragging that his slandering of Lady Sovereign would be big news.

A publicist for Lady Sovereign didn't immediately comment early Sunday morning.

On Wednesday, West was charged with misdemeanor battery, grand theft and vandalism over the destruction of a paparazzo's camera at Los Angeles International Airport in September.

"In the master bedroom, there was a trap door where the coffins were brought up," she said. "And during the night, you would hear that chain hoist, as if a coffin were being brought up. But when Ed went to check, there was nobody down there."

Warren, whose husband died in 2006, has nothing to do with the movie. She said the house was "cleared" of the evil presence after a seance in 1988. A book and a television documentary followed.

The current owners, who rent out part of the home to another family, have removed the street number from the house and posted "no trespassing" signs. Trotta-Smith says they are concerned about the four children who live there.

"Most people are respectful. They stay on the road. They might take a picture," Trotta-Smith said. "But we have had a few problems with people kind of rudely coming up to the door and scaring our kids, telling them the house is haunted."

Calls to the Snedeker family were returned by the film production company, who said they would attempt to arrange

an interview.

Film producer Andrew Trapani said he believed the mother, Carmen Snedeker, was very credible, and believes the film does a good job depicting what her family went through. The movie was filmed in Teulon, Manitoba.

He said the names of the family and town in the film were fictionalized, in part to try and keep unwanted attention away from the real home. The Snedekers and Southington are identified on the film's Web site.

"We certainly didn't set out to upset anyone or have anyone show up at their home," he said. "I think in this case, this particular supernatural haunting had a much larger following than even I had anticipated."

Trotta-Smith said she's working with the police but has no plans to put up a fence. She said she just wants a normal life in the house, but she's not sure that will be possible if the movie becomes a big hit.

"I'm a little worried about this Halloween because I imagine that's when they will release the DVD and get everyone worked up again."

HORROR

From Page 20

beautiful yard, too."

The movie, starring Virginia Madsen and Kyle Gallner and released by Lionsgate, is loosely based on stories that revolved around the house in the 1980s.

The residents at the time, the Snedeker family, claimed their son would hear strange noises in his basement bedroom, which once held casket displays and was near the old embalming room. He also claimed to see shadows on the wall of people who were not there. A niece visiting the home said she felt hands on her body as she tried to sleep, and her covers levitated.

The family brought in Ed and Lorraine Warren, self-described paranormal researchers, who became famous for documenting the alleged "Amityville Horror" haunting of a home on Long Island.

Lorraine Warren says she felt an evil presence in the Southington home and experienced the haunting herself when she spent a night there.

"In the master bedroom, there was a trap door where the coffins were brought up," she said. "And during the night, you would hear that chain hoist, as if a coffin were being brought up. But when Ed went to check, there was nobody down there."

Warren, whose husband died in 2006, has nothing to do with the movie. She said the house was "cleared" of the evil presence after a seance in 1988. A book and a television documentary followed.

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"There are creatures looming

Dad says visits to prison are no place for 6-year-old

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: My ex-wife has been spending every weekend visiting her fiance, who is in prison. It is a five-hour round trip from where she lives, so she stays the night in a hotel due to the long drive. If she has our 6-year-old daughter, "Emma," on the weekend, the child goes with her. My ex knows I don't want Emma in a prison.

The only way I have to prevent my little girl from having to go is to keep her with me every weekend. My wife is supportive, but she is concerned because we never have a night to ourselves. She says we are enabling my ex's poor choices by taking Emma every time my ex wants to shirk her parental responsibility.

Is my wife right? Are we enabling my ex? Is it more important to keep my daughter away from the prison or take my wife out on a date once a month? Any advice would be greatly appreciated.



Dear Abby

DAD IN GEORGIA

DEAR DAD: This is a subject you should discuss with the lawyer who handled your divorce. I seriously doubt that when custody was awarded the judge would have agreed that accompanying her mother to a prison every weekend to visit her fiance is "quality time."

If you and your wife would like to go out on a date, your daughter's presence shouldn't prevent it. Hire a sitter.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Last night, I went to the movies and took an aisle seat in the back row. Two different couples came in late, and each one asked me to move over so they could sit together. I said, "I got here early, and I like this seat." I did not go on to explain that I have a torn tendon in my knee and needed the seat in order to stretch my leg.

They became upset and were very rude. If the seats were so important, they could have arrived early or on time.

Abby, my husband died in an airplane crash many years ago. I would give anything to have my husband in the same theater, the same city, the same planet! Couldn't those people spend two hours separated by one seat from their spouse?

MARSHA IN SAUSALITO, CALIF.

DEAR MARSHA: Please accept my sympathy for the tragic loss of your husband. Sometimes it isn't what you say to people, but the tone in which it is said. Perhaps if you had been less terse in your reply to the couple who asked you to move over, they would not have become hostile.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: The oldest of the cousins in our family is being married in July. My aunt told me over the holidays that because I am now an adult (I will graduate from college in June), I would be receiving my own invitation rather than be included with my parents.

My invitation arrived today and enclosed with it was a personal note from my cousin encouraging the attendance of my boyfriend, who she says would be welcome as well. I believe that because I received my own invitation and will be bringing a guest, I should arrive with my own gift rather than sign my name to the gift my parents bring. My mother, however, says I am being "silly" and that it's not necessary. What do you think?

JENNIFER IN SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIF.

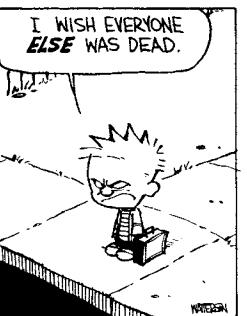
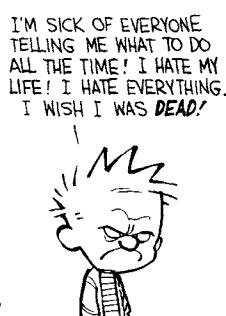
DEAR JENNIFER: I think your cousin is thoughtful and gracious, that you are an equally courteous guest and that you should follow your instincts.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

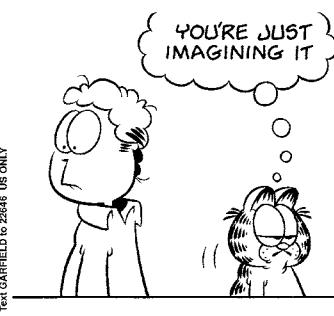
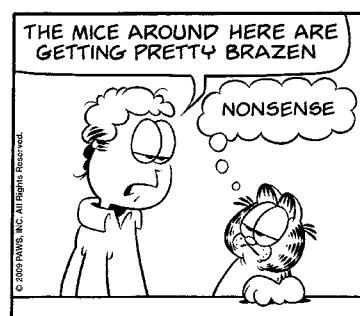
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



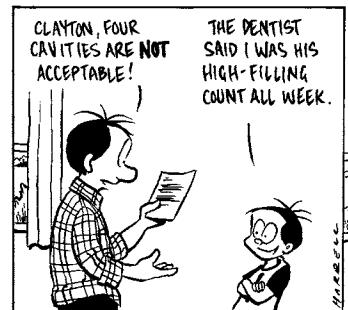
By Bill Waterson

Garfield®



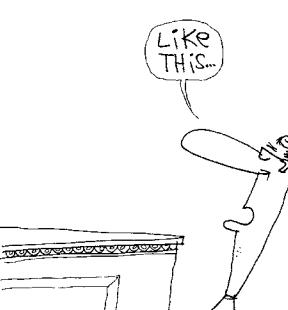
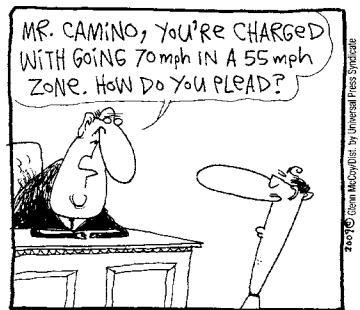
By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 VHS 36 Trenches
 - 2 Ostrich's 37 Walking sticks
 - 3 Bill 38 Senescence
 - 4 Strolls 41 —
 - 5 "El —" 42 Rowboat
 - 8 TV's Dr. 43 Chewing needs
 - 12 Mosque 44 Menageries
 - 13 Privy 45 Prior to 50 Concept
 - 14 Carnival attraction 51 Catch sight of
 - 15 Effervescent 52 Shaft of light
 - 17 Lecherous look 53 Hen pen
 - 18 Pitcher part
 - 19 "Caddy-shack" critter
 - 21 Passé
 - 24 Harp's ancestor
 - 25 Cupid's alias
 - 26 Unsteady
 - 30 Intention
 - 31 Actor LaBeouf et al
 - 32 Fish eggs
 - 33 Dilettante's interest
 - 35 Ready for anything

Solution time: 21 mins.



Yesterday's answer 3-24

- DOWN**
- 1 Clothing protector
 - 23 Grant's is famous
 - 40 Let fall
 - 41 Do what I say
 - 44 Savings plan acronym
 - 45 "not choose to run"
 - 46 Ultra-modernist
 - 47 Space

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Peyton Manning, 33; Alyson Hannigan, 35; Sharon Corr, 39; Tommy Hilfiger, 58

Happy Birthday: Keep a clear head if you want to take advantage of what's coming your way. Not everything will be obvious, so do your research. An opening you've been hoping for will emerge and the chance to do something great will be possible. Never give up and you will reach your goals. Your numbers are 7, 10, 16, 27, 33, 39, 46

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You can afford to be a little impulsive if you are also ready to go the distance. Being sure of your next move will enhance the confidence that others have in you. Look for any opportunity for greater financial security. ☀☀☀

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): It's a slow, steady pace that will lead to achievement. A sensitive issue can now be brought out in the open and fixed to your liking. Don't back away from change when that's what's required. ☀☀☀

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Someone will take advantage of you if you are too open about your plans and ideas. Be a little more discreet if you want to get the credit you deserve for the work you put in. Stand up for your rights and your beliefs. ☀☀

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Surprise everyone by bringing about some much-needed change. If you are the one who is stepping out on the limb, you will also be the one to benefit in the end. A trip will reinforce how important a role you play in both your personal and professional life. ☀☀☀☀

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Reconsider your position and the people with whom you are sharing information. There may be someone trying to sabotage something you are trying to get off the ground. Don't let your emotions take over. ☀☀

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You may want to make a few adjustments to a deal you are involved in. Protect your po-

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Changing your mind too much may be costly. When it comes to finances, you have to be precise and willing to say no to any deal you don't like. Love should be high on your list. You can have fun but make sure your work is complete beforehand. ☀☀☀

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Kick back and have a little fun. Participate in some activities that will get your heart pumping and enable you to make some new friends. A change in the way you think and do things will set the standard for the future. ☀☀☀

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Uncertainty and adversity at work should push you in a new and creative direction. Believe in yourself. Before you know it, you will be looking at your options a little more optimistically. Love is on the rise. ☀☀☀

TAURUS (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't confuse matters by feeling you have to explain everything you do. Step into the real world and don't be afraid to do things the way you feel they work best for you. A creative outlet will turn into a moneymaker. ☀☀☀☀

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD
IN ASTROLOGYCOPRIGHT 2007
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sition and your assets from anyone who is pushy or aggressive. Don't be afraid to back away if you are uncertain. ☀☀☀

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A memory about someone from your past may be an eye-opener. Don't be too quick to give out personal information or let this person have access to your home or belongings. Take the safe route. ☀☀☀

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You'll be able to manipulate a situation you face, helping you get ahead. Don't be afraid to make some dramatic changes. You can rely on someone who has the experience to carry matters you want finished to the end. ☀☀☀

Birthday Baby: You have stamina and are compassionate, emotional and interested in others. You are forever looking for something new and unique to learn or try.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

9						2	6	
5	4	6			8		7	
3		8	5			4		
			3		4			
			4		9	6		
				6		3		
					1	2	8	
					2	6	3	
7	8							

Difficulty Level ★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

8	9	5	3	7	4	1	6	2
4	1	7	6	5	2	8	3	9
2	6	3	9	8	1	5	4	7
6	2	4	1	9	5	7	8	3
3	5	1	7	4	8	2	9	6
9	7	8	2	3	6	4	1	5
7	8	2	4	6	3	9	5	1
1	4	6	5	2	9	3	7	8
5	3	9	8	1	7	6	2	4

Difficulty Level ★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEM LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE YEAR OF THE OX

M	D	P	Y	T	I	R	U	C	E	S	H	E	E	P
F	E	B	R	U	A	R	Y	V	E	K	A	N	S	R
O	P	T	N	O	I	T	I	D	A	R	T	E	O	A
R	E	R	H	W	S	T	R	U	T	H	J	S	C	C
T	N	E	N	O	I	P	I	H	C	E	A	I	T	
I	D	W	R	S	D	N	E	B	P	L	N	N	A	I
T	A	O	O	A	E	I	T	R	B	E	U	I	B	C
U	B	P	C	V	D	S	C	E	I	A	A	H	L	A
D	L	S	I	E	O	N	H	A	R	T	C	E	L	
E	E	T	R	S	O	G	E	O	L	E	Y	X	E	O
W	C	A	P	T	W	I	O	L	N	C	Y	D	B	
A	Y	B	A	A	I	S	B	R	A	E	Y	N	N	M
T	C	L	C	R	T	G	A	T	T	C	S	O	I	Y
E	L	E	Y	E	A	R	I	F	E	T	M	S		
R	E	S	R	O	H	M	D	R	Y	E	K	N	O	M

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WHATZIT Solution: Birds of a feather

MUSICAL

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EMU
IBIS
LARK
GULL

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of a wish



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"When I grow up, I want to become a police officer!"

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P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

**JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT****PROMOTIONAL & OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT**

It is the policy of the Board of Education, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, that the Public School Personnel System shall be applied and administered according to the principles of equal employment opportunity as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Public Law 6 - 10, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, handicap or place of origin. Applicants for this position must be a U.S. Citizen or be eligible and authorized to work in the U.S., including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Announcement No: **PSS - 2009 - 015** Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **Systems & Software Applications Specialist**
(Education Specialist I-III / E-rate Program Coordinator)

Pay Level/Step: **31-33 / 01-12** Per Annum Salary: **\$23,706.31 - \$44,685.93**
Opening Date: **March 10, 2009** Closing Date: **March 25, 2009**
Location: **PSS - Administrative Services Office**

Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays)

Minimum Requirements:
Education Specialist I – Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Education or Education Administration, plus two (2) years work related experience in teaching, designing and implementing subject program and/or training of teachers and specialists.

Education Specialist II – Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Education or Education Administration, plus four (4) years work related experience in teaching, designing and implementing subject program and/or training of teachers and specialists OR graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Education or Education Administration, plus six (6) years work related experience in teaching, designing and implementing subject program and/or training of teachers and specialists.

Education Specialist III – Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Master's degree in Education or Education Administration, plus five (5) years work related experience in teaching, designing and implementing subject program and/or training of teachers and specialists OR graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Education or Education Administration, plus seven (7) years work related experience in teaching, designing and implementing subject program and/or training of teachers and specialists.

***Detailed job description with qualification requirements can be obtained at PSS Human Resources Office at the 3rd Retirement Building, Capitol Hill, or download it online www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources**

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3RD RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE). COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3051, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT <http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources> ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as \$25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)

COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
\$25
\$35
\$45
\$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE**Classified Ads**

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:

- *Saipan Tribune: All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.*

CANCELLATION**Classified Ads**

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Pittsburgh downs Oklahoma State, 84-76



NCAA DAYTON, Ohio (AP)—Sam Young scored 32 points and DeJuan Blair added another double-double as top-seeded Pittsburgh advanced to the round of 16 for the fifth time in eight years with an 84-76 win over Oklahoma State on Sunday.

Pitt (30-4) will play Xavier in the East Regional semifinals in Boston on Thursday.

Obi Muonelo scored 19 points for the eighth-seeded Cowboys (23-12), who gave the Panthers all they could handle before losing their touch in the final minutes. Oklahoma State made 10 3-pointers in the first half but made only two of 12 from long range after halftime.

The Panthers, who played poorly and barely escaped a first-round upset against No. 16 seed East Tennessee State, showed a champion's poise down the stretch.

The Cowboys tied it at 74 with 2:42 left on an inside shot by Marshall Moses.

But Pitt's pudgy point guard Levance Fields drove for a layup, and after OSU's James Anderson missed a 3-pointer, Fields dropped a 3 from up top to make it 79-74 with 1:27 left.

Xavier 60, Wisconsin 49

At Boise, Idaho, B.J. Raymond scored 15 points and Xavier finally broke through Wisconsin's defense midway through the second half.

The Musketeers (27-7) struggled as the Badgers controlled the pace for the first 30 minutes. Xavier pulled away with a 13-4 run and hung onto the lead from the foul line.

Derrick Brown added 15 points and C.J. Anderson had eight rebounds for fourth-seeded Xavier.

Marcus Landry scored 18 and Trevon Hughes had 17 points for the 12th-seeded Badgers. Wisconsin shot only 29 percent, including 3-for-20 on 3-point tries.



deficit in the second half and led by four before Williams took over, hitting 3s, getting rebounds and starting fast breaks with one-handed passes.

Edwin Ubiles scored 24 points for the Saints.

Michigan State 74, USC 69

At Minneapolis, Travis Walton scored a career-high 18 points to lift the second-seeded Spartans into the round of 16 for the eighth time in 12 years.

Durell Summers added 11 points and eight rebounds for Michigan State (28-6), which has advanced to the regional semifinals more times in the last dozen years than any team but Duke.

The Spartans will play third-seeded Kansas on Friday in Indianapolis.

Dwight Lewis scored 19 points and DeMar DeRozan added 18 points for USC (22-13), which is starting to look like more than just a football school under coach Tim Floyd.

Kansas 60, Dayton 43

At Minneapolis, Cole Aldrich posted a triple-double with 13 points, 20 rebounds and 10 blocked shots to lead defending champion Kansas past 11th-seeded Dayton.

The 6-foot-11 Jayhawks sophomore nearly matched the NCAA tournament record for blocks in a game of 11 set by Shaquille O'Neal for LSU in 1992. Shawn Bradley had 10 in 1991 for BYU.

Sherron Collins had 25 points to pace the third-seeded Jayhawks (27-7).

Chris Wright had 10 points for Dayton (27-8). The Flyers shot a woeful 22.2 percent in their lowest-scoring game of the season.

Arizona 71, Cleveland State 57

At Miami, Nic Wise and 12th-seeded Arizona again adapted well to its spot as a tournament long shot, building an early 14-point lead and eliminating Cleveland State.

The Wildcats are appearing in the tournament for the 25th year in a row, two shy of the record. But they've never been seeded so low and drew criti-

cism as undeserving of a berth.

Wise scored 21 points to lead four double-figure scorers for the Wildcats (21-13).

Bracket-busting Cleveland State (26-11), was seeded 13th and struggled to solve Arizona's zone defense. Norris Cole scored 17 points.

SOUTH REGIONAL

Syracuse 78, Arizona State 67

At Miami, Eric Devendorf hit a pair of 3-pointers less than a minute apart to halt a big Arizona State rally, and the third-seeded Orange held on to advance.

Devendorf finished with 21 points and Andy Rautins added 17 for Syracuse (28-9), which moves on to play second-seeded Oklahoma (29-5) in Memphis on Friday.

Rihards Kuksiks scored a career-high 20 points, and Ty Abbott also finished with 20 for the sixth-seeded Sun Devils (25-10). James Harden, the Pac-10 player of the year, was held to 10 points—all in the second half—on 2-for-10 shooting.

WEST REGIONAL

Missouri 83, Marquette 79

At Boise, Idaho, Kim English came off the bench to "pinch shoot" for the hurting J.T. Tiller and made two free throws with 5.5 seconds left to lift the Tigers.

It was quite an encore for English, who scored 15 points during one 4 1/2 minute stretch in the first half and helped third-seeded Mizzou (30-6) turn a six-point deficit into a 16-point lead.

Jerel McNeal matched his career high with 30 points in helping Marquette rally. Wesley Matthews scored 24, but it wasn't enough—even with Dominic James back from a foot injury.

Lazar Hayward stepped over the baseline on the inbounds pass after English's clutch foul shots, and the Golden Eagles were forced to foul. Leo Lyons made two more free throws to ice the game and Missouri moved onto the West Regional semifinals to play Memphis.

Rockets stun Spurs to claim division lead



SAN ANTONIO (AP)—The Houston Rockets are tops in Texas and the Southwest Division once again.

Luis Scola dropped in the winning layup with 11.2 seconds left after a bullet pass from Yao Ming, and the Rockets rallied in the fourth to wrest first place in the division from the San Antonio Spurs with an 87-85 victory Sunday.

Ron Artest scored 24 as Houston won its fourth straight to reclaim the top spot in the division for the first time since Christmas. The Rockets lead San Antonio by a half-game.

Tim Duncan scored 23 points for the Spurs, whose grip on the No. 2 spot in the West disappeared when Matt Bonner's 3-pointer at the buzzer clanked off the rim.

Scola finished with 19 points and 17 rebounds for Houston, which trailed by five midway through the fourth before storming back.

Tony Parker had 22 points and 12 assists but missed a tough 7-footer with 2.9 seconds left with San Antonio trailing by one.

Cavaliers 96, Nets 88

At East Rutherford, N.J., LeBron James had 30 points and 11 rebounds, and Cleveland won its ninth straight game to tie a franchise record with its 57th victory.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 18 points and became the career leader in blocked shots for the Cavaliers, who improved the NBA's best record to 57-13.

Vince Carter had 25 points and nine rebounds, but without injured All-Star point guard Devin Harris the Nets simply lacked the firepower to hang with the NBA's toughest defensive team.

New Jersey had its two-game winning streak snapped and fell two games behind Chicago for the eighth and final playoff berth in the Eastern Conference.

Heat 101, Pistons 96

At Auburn Hills, Mich., Dwyane Wade scored 39 points for Miami and Udonis Haslem hit the go-ahead jumper with 6.3 seconds left.

Wade also blocked two shots in the final 30 seconds, helping fifth-place Miami stretch its lead over Detroit to three games in the Eastern Conference standings.

Rodney Stuckey scored 24 points and Antonio McDyess had 16 points and 14 rebounds for the seventh-place Pistons.

Walter Hermann's baseline 3-pointer gave the Pistons a 96-95 lead with 13 seconds left.

Mario Chalmers missed at the other end, but Haslem grabbed the rebound and hit a high-arching shot to put the Heat back in front for good.

Detroit led for most of the game despite missing three key players—Richard Hamilton (groin), Rasheed Wallace (calf) and Allen Iverson (back).

Raptors 100, Clippers 76

At Toronto, Chris Bosh had 16 points and 13 rebounds and Shawn Marion added 14 points and 13 boards for Toronto.

Jose Calderon scored 15 points and Joey Graham added 13 for the Raptors, who have won five of six against the Clippers.

The Raptors had lost nine of 10 coming in but had little difficulty handling the struggling Clippers, leading by as many as 28 in a runaway fourth quarter. Toron-

to outrebounded Los Angeles 57-34.

Zach Randolph scored 20 points and Baron Davis added 12 for the Clippers, who have won just two of their past 12.

The Clippers have not won on the road since a 121-97 victory at Atlanta on Feb. 7. Los Angeles is 7-27 overall on the road and has lost eight straight away from home.

Thunder 97, Timberwolves 90

At Minneapolis, Kevin Durant scored 30 points and Jeff Green added 17 to lead Oklahoma City to the victory.

Durant has scored more than 20 points in 16 of his last 17 games for the Thunder, who improved to 7-5 in their last 12 games. His lone exception during that span came Feb. 27 at Dallas, when he logged only eight minutes after spraining his right ankle.

Craig Smith scored 19 points and Bobby Brown fueled a late Wolves run with 12 points in the fourth quarter. Rodney Carney had 12 of his 15 points in the fourth and Kevin Love finished with 10 for Minnesota, which trailed by as many as 32.

Hornets 99, Warriors 89

At New Orleans, Chris Paul scored 27 points and David West added 23 points for New Orleans third win in a row.

Stephen Jackson led Golden State with 22 points and 10 rebounds. Kelenna Azubuike added 16 points after missing his first eight shots.

The Warriors, who shot a season-best 56.5 percent against Philadelphia on Friday, connected on only 13 of 43 attempts in the first half.

76ers 112, Kings 100

At Sacramento, Calif., Andre Iguodala made his first 10 shots and scored 27 points, and the Philadelphia 76ers ended a two-game skid.

Thaddeus Young scored 22 points for the 76ers, who shot nearly 60 percent and never let their lead fall below double digits after taking a 17-5 lead midway through the first quarter. Louis Williams scored 18 points, Marreese Speights had 15 points and Willie Green added 10 for Philadelphia.

Francisco Garcia made six 3-pointers and scored 24 points for the Kings, who outscored the 76ers 26-17 in the fourth quarter but couldn't get closer than 11.

Sayonara! US ousted by Japan in WBC semifinals

LOS ANGELES (AP)—America's national pastime took a major hit Sunday night. On home turf, no less.

Daisuke Matsuzaka remained undefeated in the World Baseball Classic and defending champion Japan beat the United States 9-4 in the semifinals at Dodger Stadium.

Japan advanced to Monday night's title game against South Korea, a 10-2 winner over Venezuela in Saturday's semifinal. Japan won the inaugural tournament in 2006, defeating Cuba in the final.

Akinori Iwamura's RBI triple was the key hit in a five-run fourth inning against starter Roy Oswalt, and the U.S. was handed its first loss to Japan in major international play since the 2005 World Cup. The Americans had won four in a row, including an 8-4 victory in the bronze medal game at the Beijing Olympics.

The WBC has hardly been a showcase for the United States, despite having a roster loaded with major league stars.

Three years ago, the Americans were eliminated 2-1 by Mexico in the second round of the tournament after beating Japan 4-3 during pool play in Anaheim.

This time, the Americans came into their first final four appearance hobbled by injuries.

During the second round in Miami, they lost second baseman Dustin Pedroia (left side), first baseman Kevin Youkilis (sprained left ankle, left Achilles' tendinitis) and reliever Matt Lindstrom (strained right rotator cuff). Chipper Jones (right side) was replaced for the semifinal by Evan Longoria.

The Americans were the visiting team on a cold, blustery night in Los Angeles, having earned the designation by finishing second in Group 2. Japan won Group 1, with South Korea coming in second.

Matsuzaka allowed two runs and five hits in 4 2-3 innings. The Boston Red Sox ace struck out four and walked three before being pulled when he reached 98 pitches, two shy of the 100-limit for the tournament's final two rounds.

Matsuzaka, who pitched six shutout innings against Cuba last Sunday, is 3-0 in this year's WBC, having allowed 14 hits and four runs in 14 2-3 innings. He went 3-0 and was selected tournament MVP three years ago.

Oswalt got tagged, giving up six runs and six hits in 3 2-3 innings. He walked four and struck out one. The Houston Astros right-hander was 1-1 in three WBC starts, allowing nine runs, seven earned, in 11 1-3 innings.

The United States took a 2-1 lead after three innings on Brian Roberts' leadoff homer in the first and David Wright's RBI double in the third.

Japan broke loose in the fourth, with the help of an error by Roberts at second base that made two of the runs unearned. Roberts was added to the U.S. roster before the second round, replacing Pedroia.

Atsunori Inaba and Michihiro Ogasawara opened the inning with singles and the error by Roberts allowed Japan to tie the game 2-all. Kenji Johjima followed with his second sacrifice fly before Iwamura tripled into the right-field corner.

Munenori Kawasaki then singled home Iwamura. One out later, Hiroyuki Nakajima hit an RBI double on a 3-0 pitch, chasing Oswalt and giving Japan a 6-2 lead.

That put the Americans in a big hole against a team that came into the semifinals having outscored its opponents 36-9 in seven games.

But the U.S. got back in the game in the eighth on a two-run double down the left-field line by Mark DeRosa off Takanori Mahara, cutting the deficit to 6-4. Mahara avoided further damage by striking out pinch-hitter Evan Longoria and getting Roberts to ground back to the mound.

Japan tacked on three insurance runs in the bottom half off Joel Hanrahan and Scot Shields. The first scored on shortstop Derek Jeter's two-out throwing error. Ichiro Suzuki added an RBI single, and Nakajima had a run-scoring double that right fielder Adam Dunn appeared to lose in the lights.

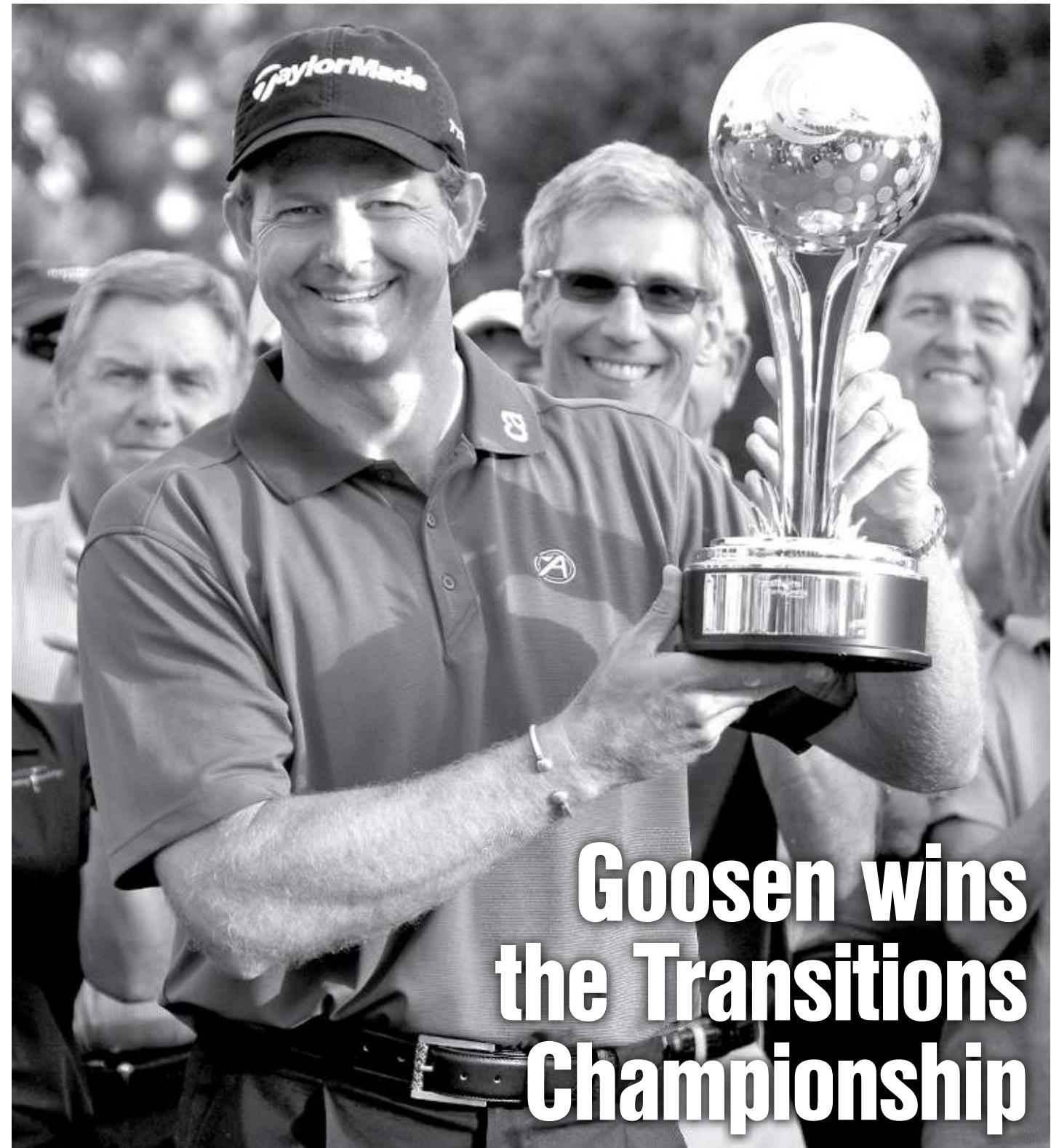
Japan's fans chanted, waved red-and-white flags and pound ed orange Thunder Stix during their country's big fourth inning.

Chants of "U-S-A! U-S-A!" which had quieted down for a while, fired back up in the eighth only to be silenced again. The Americans, who celebrated so vigorously after rallying to beat Puerto Rico for a semifinal berth, had no reason to party this time.

The announced crowd of 43,630—second-largest in WBC history and the most on U.S. soil—was bundled in jackets and blankets as temperatures hovered in the 50s and wind whipped the palm trees in the outfield. There were large pockets of empty seats throughout the stadium.

The Americans blew a scoring chance in the fifth. Jeter hit a one-out single and Jimmy Rollins walked. Matsuzaka then threw a called third strike past cleanup hitter David Wright before reliever Toshiya Sugiuchi struck out Dunn to end the threat.

Rollins went 4-for-4 with a walk and a two-out triple in the seventh. Masahiro Tanaka struck out Wright to end the inning.



Goosen wins the Transitions Championship

Retief Goosen, of South Africa, holds his trophy after winning the Transitions Championship golf tournament Sunday, March 22, 2009, at Innisbrook in Palm Harbor, Fla. AP

Transitions
Championship
For Healthy Sight

PALM HARBOR, Fla.

(AP)—Retief Goosen took an important step toward rejoining the elite in golf Sunday by closing with a 1-under 70 for a one-shot victory in the Transitions Championship, his first PGA Tour win in nearly four years.

Goosen had a two-shot lead with three holes to play on the demanding Copperhead Course at Innisbrook, when just like everyone else, he struggled to hang on. The two-time U.S. Open champion barely made it.

Needing only two putts from 25 feet for the win, he watched his first putt roll 5 feet past the hole. His par putt curled in the side of the cup, giving him a one-shot victory over Charles Howell III and Brett Quigley.

"Eventually, you wonder if you can still do it," Goosen said.

Howell, an Augusta, Ga., native who has to win over the next two weeks to earn a trip to the Masters, made bogeys on the 15th and 16th holes, and couldn't find any birdies to catch up. He shot a 69 for his best finish since winning at Riviera two years ago.

Quigley is now 0-for-342 in his 13 years on the PGA Tour, but he was bogey-free on the back nine and closed with a 68 for his second runner-up finish in as many weeks.

Former Ryder Cup captain Tom Lehman, trying to become the seventh player in his 50s to win on the PGA Tour, did not make a birdie until a long putt on the 17th hole, and he shot a 75 to tie for eighth.

Goosen, a 40-year-old South African who

was part of the "Big Three" in the world ranking three years ago, nearly fell out of the top 50 until he overcame some problems with corrective eye surgery and worked hard on his fitness, dropping some 20 pounds.

He won on the South African and Asian tours during the fall, but this was a big breakthrough—especially with the Masters coming up.

Goosen finished at 8-under 276 and won for the seventh time on the PGA Tour. It was his second victory at Innisbrook, having won in 2003 when it was played in the fall.

This looked more like June with greens so crusty and firm that the grass began dying on the weekend and some shots were difficult to hold. It was similar to Shinnecock Hills, where Goosen won his second U.S. Open in 2004.

"It definitely got like Shinnecock," he said. "You couldn't hit them soft enough."

Lehman, who turned 50 two weeks ago, had a one-shot lead going into the final round as he tried to become the first ex-Ryder Cup captain since Tom Watson in 1998 to win on the PGA Tour.

He hit a poor chip on the second hole that led to bogey and cost him the lead. That led to a revolving door of challengers, with five players atop the leaderboard at various points during the final round.

But the back nine was more about hanging on than forging ahead.

And for so many, it was about falling apart.

Steve Stricker rallied from a four-shot deficit to tie for the lead, but he couldn't sustain it. After two solid par saves, he flew the green

from a bunker on the par-3 17th for bogey, then missed the green from the middle of the 18th fairway and made another bogey. He closed with a 69 and tied for fourth.

It was the third time this year Stricker had the lead on the back nine and failed to win.

Charlie Wi chipped in twice on the front nine and made the turn with the outright lead, reaching 9 under until he was undone on the par 3s. Wi came up right and short on the 13th, leaving him a difficult pitch to a back-right pin, and he had to scramble for bogey. He missed the 15th green to the right and had to work for bogey again.

Howell, who has not missed the Masters since 2002, caught Goosen with a 12-foot birdie on the 14th. But his next tee shot was buried in deep rough just right of the 15th green, and with only 25 feet to the pin, flubbed his chip. He made bogey, then missed the 16th green well to the right and made another bogey.

"You ride on such a thin line on a track like this, where you just know every bogey hurts more than most, because you know it's so much harder to make up," Howell said.

Of the top 10 finishers, Quigley was the only player not to make bogey on the back nine.

Goosen had only two sub-par holes, but they were big. He chipped in from about 40 feet behind the ninth green to stay in the hunt, then took the outright lead two holes later with a 5-iron that barely cleared the bunkers and rolled to the back of the green for his eagle.

He made six pars over the final seven holes, which is all he needed.

D-9ers' Bansil, Falcons' Sablan tied in batting

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

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REPORTER


Robert Bansil of the D-9ers and B.J. Sablan of the Falcons are currently leading all players in batting percentage in the 2009 Budweiser Saipan Major League.

The 12 players who were included in the list of the batting leaders went to bat nine times or more as of March 16.

Bansil and Sablan averaged .555 af-

ter they hit 5-for-9 at bat.

John Acosta, also of the D-9ers, is in solo third with his average of .545 after recording a 6-for-11 performance at the plate.

Juan Iguel and Jess Iguel, both of the Ford Rangers, are in a three-way tie with Master Tigers' Mike Muna. They all averaged .500 after going 6-for-12 at bat.

Dave Camacho Jr. is in seventh spot with his .466 average, followed by J.D. Dikito of the Falcons.

Jang Jin Hyuk of the Korean Phoenix and reigning MVP Tyron Omar are tied with a .454 at bat average (5-for-11).

Interestingly, so far no one from league-leading Rock Steady made it to the list of batting leaders.

The Rangers' Pete Tomokane has the most doubles with three, while four players are tied with two apiece—Roy Celis, J.D. Dikito, Mike Muna, and Jess Mesa.

Reno Celis currently has the most triples with two, while Ben Taisacan of the Rangers is the lone player so far to record a homerun.

Taisacan is also the league leader in RBIs with six.

In runs scored, Juan Iguel and Dave Camacho are tied with seven, Jess Ig-

uel and Bansil come next with six and five, respectively.

Vincent Sablan is the leader in strikeouts with 18, Mike Taitano and Thomas Joab have 13, while Jason Hayes (11), Paul Camacho (10), and Shane Yamada (10) make up the rest of the leaders.

Based on seven or more innings, Kelvin Kapileo is on top of the list in earned run average (ERA). Kapileo has a perfect 0.00 ERA in nine innings, followed by Yamada (0.00 in seven), Joab (0.77 in nine), Ed Santos (0.87 in eight), Hayes (0.87 in eight), and Sablan (1.00 in 14).

Dela Cruz is SGA March Ace



Sporting a Greg Norman golf straw hat, former Tinian senator Ray Dela Cruz tamed the greens and fairways of the Kingfisher Golf Links last March 15 to win the Saipan Golfers Association's March Ace Tournament.

A 15 handicapper, Dela Cruz shot

41 in the front and an improved 39 at the back and finished a stroke ahead of 29 handicapper and eventual runner-up John "Jeffrey" Takai with his net 65.

Takai shot a gross of 96 to card a net of 67.

SGA president Ben Aldan then nipped Martin Sablan for third, clinching the spot on a bogey against

cis Rebuyon chipped in 20, Sonny Ranola had 18, George Villasan fired 16, Nolan Cultura nailed 12, and Dino Valdez tallied 10.

It was a come-from-behind win for Navy Hill, which was down most of the way in the first three quarters.

China Town was still ahead, 66-65, after the third period when Navy Hill waxed hot in the payoff canto via a 33-17 scoring run to steal the game.

OPEN

Inchcape 79 – De Dios 18, Peredo

and full-contact sport based on traditional Chinese martial arts.

The 32-year-old MMA fighter was a gold medalist in sanshu event in wushu during the 2003 and 2005 SEA Games. He also won a bronze medal in the 2003 Asian Games in Korea, and a silver in Doha, Qatar in 2006.

The 5'7" Folayang, who arrived on Saipan with coach and fellow MMA fighter Mark Sangiao, said although he is still doing wushu, he is more committed now to MMA.

"I am focusing more on MMA because of exposure. In MMA, you get to fight more and thus meet different op-

ponents. Also, in MMA even if you are down on points in the first few rounds, you can still win the win. In wushu, it's different. When you are down on points, it is hard to come back," said Folayang, who idolizes "Fedor" of UFC.

The Folayang-Norita bout is among the 12 fights featured in the "Battle Ready" which will be held at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.

Preliminary bouts will begin at 6pm, but the venue will open at 5pm.

The main event will have Marianas Elite's Kelvin "The Big Hit" Fitial fighting Chicago's Ed Carpenter, while another semi main event will fea-

ture Guam's Mike "Ogre" Davis and Charleston Aiken.

Mark Sablan, one of the organizers of "Battle Ready" said as a pre-fight offering, Gorilla Warfare MMA will be hosting a clinic on Friday with the time and venue to be announced later.

Philippine MMA celebrity and Universal Reality Combat Championship president Alvin Aguilar will be conducting the two-hour clinic.

Meanwhile, tickets for the "Battle Ready" are available at Borderline, The Set, and 670. Tickets prizes are \$35 for Red Box, \$35 for General Admission, and \$45 for VIP.

Game 1, but failed to sustain his momentum in the next three games (119, 134, 134).

The four other participants in the March roll-off were Nikko Gutierrez (547), Troy Verdaguer (480), Marcel McKenzie (398), and Toby Verdaguer (303).

In the Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes Tournament, Raymond Zapanta and Diane Chong led after the first roll-off, also on Sunday.

Raymond recorded 829 pinfalls after knocking more than 200 pins in the last

two games. He had 170 and 183 pinfalls in Games 1 and 2 and was good only for the No. 3 spot, but grabbed the lead with his 219 and 257 pinfalls in Game 3 and 4.

Dannie Robles dropped to second with 761 pinfalls, followed by Kitz Barja (750), Alex Castro (714), Raymond Angeles (681), Percy Omechelang (634), and Tony Yarbwemal (470).

Chong registered 726 pinfalls in the first roll-off for a 14-pinfall lead over Emi Williams, who nailed 712 pinfalls.

and Kiribati, which used to compete in the MAC, will be seeing action in the Melanesian Championships, but the records will still be listed in the Micronesia rankings.

Over a month after the council meeting, the association on March 16 sent OAA Competition Circular 05.09 to 21 member federations, informing them of the consolidation of the three regional events into one. The circular did not say if the three regional meets will be totally scrapped and will be replaced permanently by the Oceania Regional Championships.

Sapong even disclosed that Nauru

"Mini Oceania Championships." It will run from Aug. 4 to 6 in Gold Coast, Australia, which will also host the Oceania Grand Prix Series on Aug. 8.

Each federation is allowed to send seven athletes and one official. OAA is providing funding for the trip of representatives from the various federations. The format for the championships will be finalized at the OAA Congress in May.

Rangamar said despite the changes on the dates and venue of the biennial meet, NMA will still be conducting series of trials to determine the athletes who will represent CNMI in the August tournament.

OAA calls the regional meet the

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
y-Boston	53	18	.746	
Philadelphia	35	33	.515	16 1/2
New Jersey	30	40	.429	22 1/2
New York	28	41	.406	24
Toronto	25	45	.357	27 1/2

Central Division

y-Cleveland	57	13	.814	
Detroit	34	35	.493	22 1/2
Chicago	32	38	.457	25
Milwaukee	31	40	.437	26 1/2
Indiana	29	42	.408	28 1/2

Southeast Division

x-Orlando	51	18	.739	
Atlanta	41	29	.586	10 1/2
Miami	37	32	.536	14
Charlotte	31	39	.443	20 1/2
Washington	16	55	.225	36

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Houston	47	25	.653	
San Antonio	45	24	.652	0 1/2
New Orleans	44	25	.638	1 1/2
Dallas	42	28	.600	4
Memphis	17	52	.246	28 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	45	25	.643	
Portland	44	26	.629	1
Utah	43	26	.623	1 1/2
Oklahoma City	20	50	.286	25
Minnesota	20	50	.286	25

Pacific Division

y-LA Lakers	55	14	.797	
Phoenix	38	31	.551	17
Golden State	25	45	.357	30 1/2
LA Clippers	17	53	.243	38 1/2
Sacramento	15	55	.214	40 1/2

x-Clinched playoff spot

y-Division champ

z-Clinched home court

TRANSITIONS CHAMPIONSHIP

FINAL ROUND

Retief Goosens	69	68	69	70	276
Brett Quigley	73	68	68	68	277
Charles Howell III	71	66	71	69	277
Mathew Goggin	67	74	70	67	278
Steve Stricker	69	67	73	69	27

Friends of Juan Pan Fundraising Golf Tournament



B Flight champion Manny Tenorio is flanked by Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero, left, and Joseph N. Camacho during the awards ceremony.



Participants pose with Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero, second left, before moving to hole No. 4.

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



A participant makes a shot near the water hazard on hole No. 14.



Ben Duenas takes his time before making a shot on the No. 8 hole.



RGA president Jordan Kosam tees off on the No. 12 hole, while his flightmates look on.

Joe Tudela watches his ball rolls toward hole No. 15.



Junior golfer Luther Taylor watches his shot towards the No. 8 hole.



Ladies Flight champion Leina Kim makes a shot during the Friends for Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero and Joseph N. Camacho Fundraising Golf Tournament Saturday at Kingfisher Golf Links.



Joji Taguchi in action on hole No. 10.



James Nelson chips out of the bunker on hole No. 16.



Goosen wins the Transitions Championship

Retief Goosen took an important step toward rejoining the elite in golf Sunday by closing with a 1-under 70 for a one-shot victory in the Transitions Championship, his first PGA Tour win in nearly four years.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

28 TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2009

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Inchcape notches third semis seat

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Inchcape clinched the third semis berth in the 2009 Navy Hill Friendship Basketball League after whipping Rollers Basketball Club, 79-67, Sunday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Inchcape now joins Athlete's Foot and KFC/Taco Bell in the Final Four. Pennant champion Dollar Days and IT&E will duel for the remaining semis ticket this week.

The Rollers-Inchcape playoff game was first played on Saturday, but was rained out with 2:41 left in the fourth quarter and with the latter ahead by 12, 71-59.

Inchcape picked up where it left off at the resumption of the match to advance to the next round.

Marlon De Dios top-scored for Inchcape with 18 points, while Errol Peredo chipped in 16.

Inchcape took early control of the game with De Dios asserting his might in the shaded lane, scoring eight in the first period.

Rollers were behind by 14 af-

ter the first quarter, 10-24, and they never recovered from thereon. Manny Matagolai led Rollers' losing cause, making a game-high 31 points.

Meanwhile, the Masters division of the Navy Hill caging opened Sunday with Garapan and Navy Hill winning their debut games.

Garapan drew 20-plus points from Edel Carino, Adonis Macoto, and Freddie De La Torre to tame the Wild Boys, 90-62.

Carino exploded for 28 points, while Macoto and De La Torre contributed 24 and 21 markers, respectively.

Garapan had a jackrabbit start, firing 32 points in the first period to take a 14-point lead, 32-18. Macoto and Carino had 12 points apiece in the opening quarter and added with each in the second period to give Garapan a big 54-32 halftime lead.

See INCHCAPE on Page 26



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fiji Water March Prince of the Lanes winner Raphael Zapanta is flanked by third placer Leeanne Yarobwemal, left, and Marion McKenzie during the awards ceremony at the Saipan Bowling Center Sunday.

Three in a row for Zapanta

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Youth bowler Raphael Zapanta extended his winning ways in the Fiji Water Prince/Princess of the Lanes tournament after topping the March roll-off Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center.

Zapanta tallied 776 pinfalls to beat six other youth bowlers

and secured his third straight monthly title. He started last weekend's roll-off with 208 pinfalls in Game 1, slowed down a bit in Games 2 and 3 with 196 and 151 pinfalls before finishing strong with 221 pinfalls.

The Saipan Southern High School student won by 195 pinfalls against runner-up Leeanne Yarobwemal, who totaled 581 pinfalls

See THREE on Page 26

Prince/Princess of the Lanes tournament after topping the March roll-off Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center.

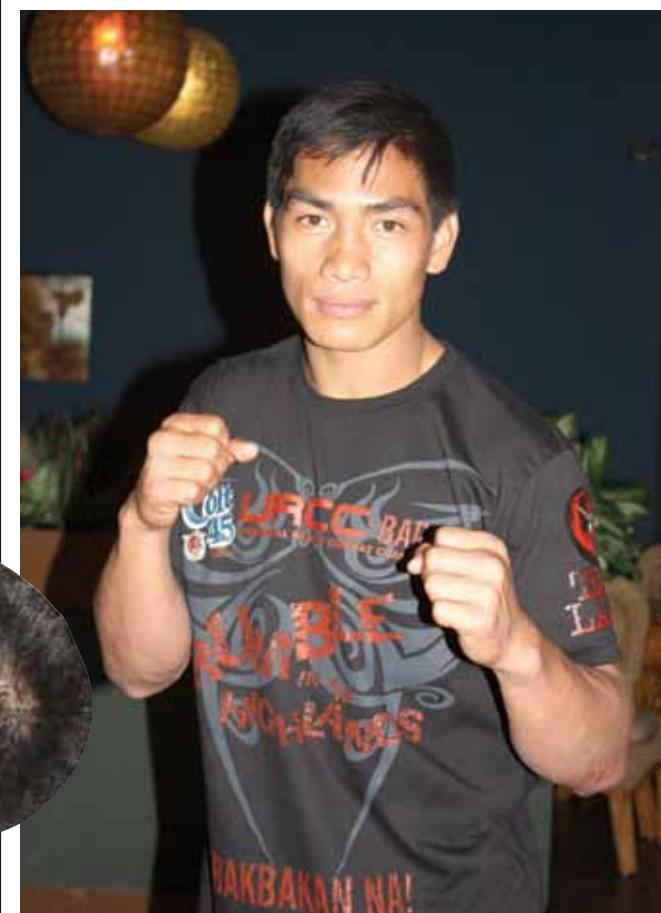
Zapanta tallied 776 pinfalls to beat six other youth bowlers

See THREE on Page 26



Inchcape's Amor Casabuena, right, drives against Rollers' Ben Lisua during their playoff game in the Navy Hill caging Saturday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Eduard "Landslide" Folayang, seen here showing his fighting form, arrived on Saipan yesterday to duel Jerome Norita in this Saturday's "Battle Ready."

'Landslide' to hit Saipan

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

One of three off-island fighters who will be featured in this Saturday's "Battle Ready" arrived on Saipan yesterday and vowed to wow the growing MMA fans in the Commonwealth with his impressive mixed martial arts skills.

Eduard "Landslide" Folayang, a URCC welterweight champion, is in town to duel local pride Jerome Denard Norita in the semi main event in the Gorilla Warfare MMA-organized "Battle Ready."



This Saturday's bout will be Folayang's first fight outside the Philippines and he is looking forward to getting his fourth win in a row.

"I am confident I can win this fight because I have been preparing for this bout for the

See LANDSLIDE on Page 26

MAC out, Oceania Regional Championships in

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



The Oceania Athletics Association has consolidated the regional athletics championships in Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia into one, giving birth to the Oceania Regional Championships 2009.

Elias Rangamar of Northern Marianas Athletics believes the move aims to cut cost for the staging of the three regional events.

NMA is among the seven OAA members competing in the Micronesian Athletics Championships.

MAC was originally set for December this year in Palau, the Polynesian meet was scheduled for July in Rarotonga, the Cook

See MAC on Page 26

Pittsburgh downs Oklahoma State, 84-76

Sam Young scored 32 points and DeJuan Blair added another double-double as top-seeded Pittsburgh advanced to the round of 16 for the fifth time in eight years with an 84-76 win over Oklahoma State on Sunday. 24

